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Wrong to use 'Allah' for God: Experts

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KUALA LUMPUR: An expert panel discussion organised by the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (Ikim) yesterday concluded is inaccurate and against reality to interpret the word "Allah" to mean God.

This is because it is against the concept of God as taught in Islam based on the local policy and current reality in Malaysia, Ikim chairman Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"Therefore, Ikim would like to stress again its stand that the crisis has created confusion, chaos and negative implications not only among Muslims but also among Christians," he told a press conference after a day-long muzakarah pakar or discussion among experts.

"This does not do any good in the relationship among the multi-religious people of Malaysia."

The discussion, themed "The Translation of God as Allah: Identifying the Cause of Problem and its Solution," was attended by 70 participants from the Attorney-General's Chambers, State Islamic Affairs Councils, State Mufti Departments, academicians and religious organisations.

The panellists were International Islamic University lecturer Assoc Prof Dr Kamar Oniah Kamaruzzaman, Religious Adviser to the Prime Minister Datuk Dr Abdullah Md Zin, PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang and Parti Keadilan Rakyat leader Dr Mohd Nur Manuty. Others were former Perlis mufti Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin, Ikim Economic and Community Studies Centre director Dr Mohd Sani Badron and Ikim Syariah Law and Politics Centre fellow Md Asham Ahmad.

"We have all agreed that we need to respect and uphold the Federal Constitution which allows freedom of religion to be practised in a peaceful and harmony situation.

"The problem we are facing now must be dealt with very carefully and should be resolved through dialogues and consensual spirit," he said.

He said Ikim will hold another session on Jan 25 themed "Managing Inter-Religious Crisis" involving religious leaders from other communities in the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism.

The objective of the next session is to identify crisis, solution and mutual understanding for the harmony relationship of all races in the country.