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# Sultan: 'Allah' exclusive to Muslims

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## SERIOUS MATTER:

Action to be taken against those who violate decree

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**S**ULTAN of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah has issued a decree that the word "Allah" is a holy word exclusive for Muslims and can never be used by religions other than Islam in Selangor.

The Selangor Islamic Religious Council (Mais) said the sultan has expressed his shock and regret over a recent statement by DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng urging the government to allow all Malay Bibles to use the word "Allah".

Mais secretary Datuk Mohd Misri Idris said following Lim's call, which received wide coverage in the media, the sultan of Selangor called for a special meeting with several Mais members, Selangor Mufti Datuk Mohd Tamyas Abd Wahid and Mais and Selangor Islamic Religious Department's

(Jais) top officials on Sunday.

Misri said the sultan expressed regret that his decree on the word "Allah" was taken lightly by certain quarters resulting in the same issue resurfacing after three years.

"The sultan has issued the same decree with regard to the use of the word 'Allah' three years ago when this issue was first brought up.

"He regretted deeply that his decree was taken lightly by certain quarters and the same issue was raised again," said Misri in a statement yesterday.

Therefore, the sultan commanded Mais and Jais to take strict action against anyone, whether non-Muslim or Muslims who still questioned or belittled the Fatwa which had been issued on this matter in accordance with the existing law in Selangor, he said.

The sultan has also ordered that non-Muslims should not interfere with matters concerning Islam to prevent hostility and misunderstanding among the races in the country.

"Furthermore, the sultan decreed that any party is strictly forbidden from exploiting Islam for political gains as it will bring destruction to the peace and harmony enjoyed by the people of various faiths in the country."

Misri reminded that in Selangor,



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there was already a law enacted by the state assembly in April 1988 and implemented in July the same year regarding the regulation of the use of the word "Allah" and this enactment clearly prohibited non-Muslims from using the word.

"The Selangor Non-Islamic Religions (Control of Propagation amongst Muslims) Enactment 1988

was created in line with Article 11 (4) of the Federal Constitution.

"Section 9 of this enactment clearly prohibits the word 'Allah' from being used by non-Muslims in any matter relating to their religion.

"Those who violated the enactment can be charged and punished."

The controversy surrounding the use of the word "Allah" resurfaced when Lim, who is Penang chief minister, had in his Christmas message demanded that the government allow Christians to use the word in the Bahasa Malaysia version of the Bible.

A 2009 High Court ruling holds that Christians have the constitutional right to use the word "Allah", as long as use of the word was limited to educating Christians.

The debate first raged that year when the Catholic church published the word "Allah" to describe the Christian God in the Malay section of its weekly newspaper, *The Herald*, which caters to its Bahasa Malaysia-literate congregation, which mostly hail from Sabah and Sarawak.

However, Lim's suggestion drew flak and criticism from several Muslim non-governmental organisations that cautioned him not to provoke Muslims.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the sultan of Selangor had the right and power as the matter was under the scope of his power under the Federal Constitution.

"The authority over (Islamic) religion lies under the sultan's jurisdiction," said Muhyiddin after a meeting with community leaders in Seremban yesterday.