

# 'Allah' issue: Proposal to Rulers

PM says  
Cabinet will  
present it to  
resolve matter

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PUTRAJAYA: The Cabinet will present to the Conference of Rulers the government's proposal to strengthen policies with regard to the use of the word "Allah", says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the Yang di-Pertuan Agong had consented for the Cabinet to do so in order to resolve the issue comprehensively.

The Prime Minister said at the same time, unity and harmony among races and religions in Malaysia would be strengthened.

Anwar said yesterday's Cabinet meeting discussed the decision to withdraw the government's appeal in the Jill Ireland Lawrence Bill case, which was related to publications containing the word Allah.

"The Cabinet took note that the decision (to withdraw) only revolved around administrative matters, and it does not change the decision made by the Federal Court in 2014.

"The Cabinet would like to stress that the government respects, acknowledges and adheres to state



**All smiles:**  
Anwar and Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa (on Anwar's right) mingling with guests during the Health Ministry's Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang.  
- Bernama

enactments and decrees by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on Feb 7, 2023, calling for the existing policy on the use of the word Allah to remain," he said in a statement yesterday.

He added that the government would continue to defend the Federal Constitution, particularly Article 3 with regards to Islam being the religion of the Federation and that other religions may be practised in peace and harmony.

On May 15, the government withdrew its appeal against the High Court decision, which allowed the word Allah, among others, to be used by non-Muslims

in publications for educational purposes.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the move was due to a contradiction between a Home Ministry administrative order and a Cabinet decision in 1986.

He said this was related to the confiscation of published materials at that time, and not a theological issue involving the use of the words.

He said his ministry had carefully examined the decision of the Kuala Lumpur High Court on March 10, 2021, and found a contradiction in the\* administrative instructions, which caused the

decision to favour Jill Ireland.

On March 10, 2021, Justice Nor Bee Ariffin, who is now a Court of Appeal judge, ruled that a 1986 Home Ministry directive to prohibit the use of the words Allah, "Baitullah", "Kaabah" and "solat" by non-Muslims was illegal and unconstitutional.

This follows the court's decision to allow a judicial review for Jill Ireland, a Christian of Melanau descent, to uphold the constitutional right to practise her religion.

Jill Ireland initiated legal action in 2008 when eight CDs she had brought in from Indonesia were confiscated by Customs officers

at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 as they contained the word Allah.

She then filed for a judicial review to challenge the seizure of the CDs and declarations from the court that her constitutional rights were violated, among others.

In 2014, the High Court ordered the Home Ministry to return the CDs to her, but did not address the constitutional points as it was bound by a Federal Court ruling.

The order to return the CDS was upheld by the Court of Appeal the following year, but Jill Ireland proceeded with her challenge on the Home Ministry's directive that resulted in the forfeiture.