

Churches tell Najib: Respect law, remove anti-Christian rules, policies
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 5 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak should respect the law and start removing rules and policies that have seen Christians being victimised by the bureaucracy, a national group representing over 90 per cent of churches said yesterday.

In a strongly-worded statement, the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) called on the prime minister to check the growing systematic religious attacks against Christians nationwide over the past one year.

Ng heads the CFM. — Picture courtesy of egagah.blogspot.com
It also called on Najib to act and stop the attempts to “murder” and “destroy” his commitment and legacy to religious moderation he is championing.

Anglican Bishop Ng Moon Hing, who heads the CFM, urged the PM to set up a non-Muslim religious affairs ministry to safeguard and protect the interests and rights of not only Christians but Buddhists, Sikhs, Taoists and Hindus.

“We hope that there will be maximum consultation in respect of the structure and operations of the ministry,” he said, adding that it was only a first step as Christian leaders were not naïve enough to assume their religious issues would be solved without the commitment and collaboration of all other ministries and organs of government.

Ng, who is also the head of the Anglican diocese of West Malaysia, urged Najib to lift the government ban against Christians using the word “Allah” to also refer to their god.

He said Christians nationwide had been victimised enough by groups with “a selective reading of the Federal Constitution that is intentionally used to legitimise discriminatory laws and practices which favours one community over another.”

He said Christians were now resorting to raising their issues publicly because it was the most effective way for the government to take action.

He added church leaders have exhausted meetings with Putrajaya “at the highest ministerial level” and see inertia in resolving all remaining issues constructively and expeditiously.

“There is a very wide and alarming disconnect between what you intend to happen and what is happening on the ground.

“The policy of moderation which you uphold does not seem to have filtered down to all levels of government,” he said, just hours after sitting down to lunch with the country's sixth PM yesterday.

The government had also issued a statement after the lunch meeting, promising full engagement and consultation on Christian issues starting with the mission schools, Bible knowledge education and tax-exemption status for the creed's organisations in what is seen as an attempt to repair relations with churches.

Christians say their constitutional rights have been systematically been eroded since winning a landmark court victory to use the word "Allah".

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