

Selangor Ruler angry over Khalid's syura council statement
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 23 — The Sultan of Selangor expressed anger and shock today at Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim's claim that the Ruler had suggested the formation of a syura advisory council, says the Sultan's private secretary.

Khalid had said yesterday the idea for the advisory council to resolve a controversial raid on a church — comprising him, state Mufti Datuk Setia Mohd Tamyas Abd Wahid and Tamyas' deputy Datuk Abdul Majid Omar — came from the Ruler during a meeting last week.

Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah's (picture) private secretary Datuk Mohamad Munir Bani told The Malaysian Insider today that in the meeting, Khalid merely said he wanted to meet Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) officials to get an explanation on the Selangor Islamic Religious Department's (Jais) August 3 raid on the church premises.

"He did not order the menteri besar at all to form the syura council. That is why he is shocked and angry at what happened," said Mohamad Munir.

"He did not say anything about the syura council. I myself do not know how the menteri besar could say that it was an order from the Sultan. Now, the Sultan is angry and shocked and is instructing the menteri besar to correct that statement," he added.

Jais entered the spotlight earlier this month when it raided the evangelical church's premises in Petaling Jaya during a dinner function.

The incident drew condemnation from lawmakers and Christian leaders, re-igniting a religious tension that the Najib administration has been struggling to quell since the "Allah" row.

Jais denied, however, that it had raided the church, insisting instead that it had merely conducted an "inspection" to investigate a complaint that Muslims were present during the function.

Selangor state executive councillor Datuk Hasan Ali also backed the department, claiming that proof of proselytisation had been found and pointing out that such activities were prohibited under the law.

The Selangor government has since ordered a probe into the incident and urged for calm, but pro-government newspapers continued filling their pages with claims of purported attempts by Christian organisations to convert impoverished Muslims by offering charity.

Khalid said yesterday that the syura council would be tasked with compiling information from Jais and Harapan Komuniti, the organiser of the dinner function held at DUMC on the night of the raid.

He added that, if necessary, the council may also summon DUMC officials and the 12 Muslims who were at the function to have their statements recorded.

"During the meeting last week, the menteri besar suggested to the Selangor Sultan to call the church officials to get information, and then the menteri besar said he also wanted to bring a mufti," said Mohamad Munir today.

"His Majesty said there was no problem and asked him to also bring the deputy chairman along to get advice on syariah matters. That was all. His Majesty did not say anything about a syura council, so what the menteri besar said was wrong," he added.

The royal official pointed out that the syura council was unnecessary as there were already state Islamic bodies like Jais, the Selangor Mufti Department and the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (Mais).

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