

Syura council now just a hearing committee, says Selangor

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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 24 — Selangor has backtracked over the formation of its Syura council after the palace expressed its displeasure, now appearing to downgrade it to a “hearing committee”.

The state government announced on Monday the formation of a Syura advisory council, on the advice of the state ruler, comprising Mentri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim (picture) and state Mufti Datuk Setia Mohd Tamyas Abd Wahid in a bid to end the raging debate over the recent raid on a church.

But the Sultan’s private secretary Datuk Mohamad Munir Bani told The Malaysian Insider that Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah did not make such a suggestion and was now “shocked and angry”.

The PKR-led administration said in a statement late last night that it “regretted the confusion” on the use of the term Syura council for the council to find a resolution to the inspection by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) on the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) on August 3.

“Therefore, the state government has decided to change the name of the committee to the Hearing Committee to avoid any overlap with the Selangor Syura Council that is led by the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (Mais),” it said.

But the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) government insisted that the original objectives, brief and membership of the committee remains the same as discussed by the mentri besar and the Sultan.

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 exco 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.

Selangor 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.

MB Khalid also said on Monday 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.

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