

Jais church raid report expected end Sept, says Khalid
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By Boo Su-Lyn

SHAH ALAM, Aug 30 — The Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) will complete a report on its controversial raid of the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) by the end of September, Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim said today.

The Selangor menteri besar also said the state's hearing working group would meet Jais and representatives from NGO Harapan Komuniti — which organised the dinner at DUMC that Jais disrupted on August 3 — two more times at most.

The working group — comprising Khalid, state Mufti Datuk Setia Mohd Tamyas Abd Wahid and deputy state Mufti Datuk Abdul Majid Omar — met both parties last Thursday in a bid to resolve the debacle that has incensed Muslims and Christians against the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) administration.

"From Jais's perspective, they think there's a prima facie case," Khalid told reporters today at his open house.

"Harapan Komuniti said it's just a gathering," he added.

He stressed that he could not give his conclusion after the initial meeting, saying it would be unfair to both parties as Jais had yet to issue a full report of the contentious raid.

Jais has said that it "inspected" DUMC on a complaint that participants at the charity dinner were trying to convert the 12 Muslims present at the function to Christianity. Proselytising Muslims is against the law in Malaysia.

Harapan Komuniti — which helps AIDS patients and impoverished single mothers — has said it featured prayer, religious songs and a quiz on Islam at its dinner, but denied it was aimed at converting the Muslims present.

Khalid said that the initial meeting focused on three issues. These were to ascertain the facts, confirm the process of the raid, and whether such disruptions have occurred in the past.

"Process means what right you have to go there? What was the occasion like?" he said.

"Third is to see whether there are similar patterns before, meaning, was this visit — if you want to call it — is common or uncommon and all that," added the MB.

The controversial raid has escalated religious conflict between Muslims and Christians, with Malay newspapers highlighting allegations of Christians trying to convert Muslims through welfare work.

Influential cleric Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin, however, said recently that Muslims should take care of their own poor, instead of accusing Christians of proselytising when churches helped poor Muslims.

Several PAS banners here bearing the picture of PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz

Nik Mat were also found last Saturday to have been defaced with markings depicting the cross.

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