

Exco: Decision for no speakers was by fatwa council
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By Bernard Cheah

GEORGE TOWN (Aug 14, 2011): The decision to prohibit the use of loud speakers at mosques and suraus in the state during the reading of Quranic verses before dawn prayers was made by the Penang Fatwa Council, not the state government.

State Religious Affairs, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Committee chairman Abdul Malik Abul Kassim said that the decision was made during a state Fatwa council meeting headed by Penang Mufti Sahibul Samahah Datuk Seri Hassan Ahmad on June 6 this month under the Syariah law.

"We (the state government) respect the decision and had no involvement when it was made," he said.

Reading from excerpts of the Fatwa council meeting minutes, he said that the State Islamic Religious Affairs Department (JHEAIPP) then issued a circular to mosques and suraus in Penang on the July 12 decision.

"The state was not aware of this until it was reported in the newspapers, and I had received calls about it recently," he told a press conference this in Komtar today.

The State Fatwa Council was reported as saying that this could go against the Syariah law and could disturb other people inside and outside these places of worship.

Abdul Malik said there are certain quarters that are out to politicise the matter to defame the state government.

In Kota Baru, Bernama reports that PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat agreed with the Penang Fatwa Committee's decision and does not think that a loud speaker should be used when reciting the Quran in a mosque before the call to morning prayers.

"We (Muslims) are only allowed to raise our voice for the azan (call to prayer)," he told reporters after launching Koperasi Rakyat Kelantan Berhad here today.

Nik Abdul Aziz, who also is Kelantan Menteri Besar, said that using a loud speaker would disturb people who are sleeping or sick, and Muslims should be sensitive and considerate.

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