

PAS to meet Jais, DUMC over church raid
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By Boo Su-Lyn



Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang says PAS will send letters to Jais and DUMC tomorrow to meet them. — Picture by Boo Su-Lyn

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7 — PAS will meet the Selangor religious authorities and the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) separately to discuss Wednesday's controversial church raid, party president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said today.

He said media reports and Selangor executive councillor Datuk Hasan Ali's explanation of the Selangor Islamic Religious Department's (Jais) contentious raid did not suffice as they were second-hand information.

"It must be from the relevant parties," Hadi told a packed press conference today.

He said the party's central working committee did not deliberate on taking action against Hasan, despite the senior PAS member's defence of the Jais raid on a multiracial dinner at DUMC.

Hadi added that PAS will send letters to Jais and the evangelical church tomorrow, informing them of its intent to meet with them.

Hasan broke ranks with Pakatan Rakyat when he backed Jais's late-night disruption of NGO Harapan Komuniti's dinner, at DUMC's premises in Petaling Jaya.

He claimed last Thursday "Quran" and "pray" were used in the presence of Muslims at the function, claiming that this was part of the authorities' evidence of Christians proselytising to Muslims.

Hasan's defence of Jais came just after Selangor Mentri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim expressed regret over the incident.

The controversial PAS man stuck by his guns and was quoted by Umno-owned Mingguan Malaysia today as saying that he was willing to be sacked for the sake of defending Islam.

Other pro-Umno newspapers — Berita Harian and Harian Metro — have highlighted since yesterday allegations that Christian organisations are secretly trying to convert impoverished Muslims through welfare aid, such as cash, free food and housing.

Christian churches have demanded evidence behind such accusations, while a priest has dismissed them as old rumours used to pit Muslims against Christians.

Hadi refused to answer a reporter who asked if it was wrong for Muslims to receive financial assistance from Christian churches.

“I don’t have the authority to answer. That’s for the mufti to answer,” said the chief of the Islamist party.

Former Perlis mufti Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin said earlier today that it was not a sin for destitute Muslims to receive aid from non-Muslims, pointing out that the blame lay with practitioners of Islam who were supposed to help their fellow believers.

The influential cleric also questioned if red tape and the lack of state alms have forced needy Muslims to seek help from Christian churches.

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