

Malaysia two-faced in Saudi blogger saga, says US paper
The Malaysian Insider
February 14 , 2012
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 15 — Malaysia has been labelled a “champion of double-talk” by the Washington Post after deporting Saudi Arabian blogger Hamza Kashgari to face allegations of insulting Prophet Muhammad, a crime punishable by death in the oil-rich kingdom.

In an editorial yesterday, the US newspaper scolded Malaysia for sending the 23-year-old newspaper columnist back home after he fled to Kuala Lumpur, despite local human rights lawyers obtaining a court order barring his return to Riyadh.

“His persecution has been facilitated by another champion of double-talk, the government of Malaysia, which claims to respect the rule of law but bundled Mr Kashgari onto a private Saudi jet Sunday in spite of a court order prohibiting his deportation,” the leading American daily wrote.

Malaysian authorities previously denied that the courts had barred the deportation of the writer, despite the High Court ruling handing Kashgari’s lawyers such an order.

A copy of the order obtained by The Malaysian Insider showed the court ordered that “any act of deportation against the applicant is suspended until Tuesday 14.2.2012 or until the completion of the final hearing of a habeas corpus application, of which the hearing date will be determined on 14.2.2012 at 9.30am.”

Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein denied on Monday the existence of such an order and suggested that the claim was made up.

But the home minister, the Malaysian government and two other respondents filed a preliminary objection yesterday against Kashgari’s habeas corpus application that will be heard on February 22.

The columnist is seeking an order for him to be brought before the Malaysian court to be charged, Bernama Online reported.

Kashgari fled Saudi Arabia last Thursday after being accused of insulting Islam and Prophet Muhammad, through his postings in the microblogging website Twitter on February 4. He deleted his postings the next day.

According to the Washington Post, Kashgari, a supporter of the Arab Spring that toppled autocrats in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, had sent out tweets on the Prophet’s birthday addressing him as an equal.

Kashgari has since apologised but was still detained upon arrival in Riyadh on Sunday night and charged with blasphemy.

The crime is punishable by execution under Saudi Arabia's strict interpretation of Islamic syariah law. It is not a capital crime in Malaysia

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/malaysia-two-faced-in-saudi-blogger-saga-says-us-paper/>