

Hasan Ali screens 'proof' of proselytisation
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, April 2 — Sacked Selangor executive councillor Datuk Hasan Ali today screened videos of three Malays who were allegedly converted by Christians, just two days after a seminar for teachers on the "threat of Christianisation" was held in Johor.

A 47-year-old man and his wife spoke in a 42-minute video about how they were converted by a Christian couple from Australia.

Hasan speaks to reporters at a press conference where he showed 'proof' of Malays who had converted to Christianity. — Picture by Jack Ooi
Another 16-minute "summary" video of a total 90 minutes of footage shows Hasan praying with a 27-year-old to return him to Islam.

A man, identified as Ahmad Syafiq Ridzuan, can be heard off-screen with only his hand, holding Hasan's, seen in the video.

In the first video, a 47-year-old given the alias Ramli Abdullah said he had fallen into gangsterism and drugs before meeting the couple in 2002 when they gave him shelter.

"They treated me very well. Only after staying with them for a year then I found out it was a Christian organisation.

"They told me non-Christians would go to hell but I would go to heaven if I accept Jesus as my saviour," he said.

He added that after going for discipleship training in Singapore and working with a "Raymond Koh" he described as a reverend from 2004 to 2008, he estimated there were thousands of Malays who had become Christians.

"But those I met directly, more than 300 or 400 Malays from Perlis to Johor and even Kelantan and Terengganu," Ramli said in the video.

He also said he worked for Harapan Komuniti, which called itself a non-faith-based NGO, that had three units — HIV, disaster and a reading room for children by which Christians approached Muslims.

Harapan Komuniti was the NGO embroiled in the allegations that Muslims were being proselytised at a dinner hosted by the Damansara Utama Methodist Centre (DUMC) in August last year.

Its executive director is Raymond Koh, who had insisted that religious authorities trespassed into what was a "thanksgiving dinner" attended by 120 Malaysians of different races.

Both Ramli and his 42-year-old wife, whose faces were pixelated and voices altered, said they have since returned to Islam after being counselled by Hasan's anti-proselytisation movement Unit Selamatkan Akidah (USA).

According to Hasan's aide, the woman, given the alias "Zakiah Musa", returned to Islam first last year before convincing her husband to join her.

Former Selangor PAS chief Hasan has repeatedly accused Christians of proselytising Muslims since first becoming part of the Selangor Pakatan Rakyat (PR) government in 2008.

Hasan, who was in charge of Islamic affairs when he was part of the PKR-led administration, refused to allow any recording of the video, saying he was duty-bound to protect all individuals involved.

The Gombak Setia assemblyman said he had no further proof at this point but said that it was already remarkable that the trio had come forward given how those who convert are disowned by their family and Muslim friends.

"They asked me, how can the safety of their lives be guaranteed," he said.

The video's screening comes after the mercury rose between Muslim and Christian groups over Saturday's seminar on the "Christian threat" organised by the Johor Mufti and Education departments that required the attendance of over 300 religious schoolteachers.

Its original title — "Strengthening the Faith: The Dangers of Liberalism and Pluralism and the Threat of Christianity towards Muslims. What is the Role of Teachers?" — was changed to drop the reference to Christians after much outcry from non-Muslim religious groups.

But the Mufti Department insisted its content would not be changed, leading to further anger from the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST).

The interfaith group called on Datuk Seri Najib Razak to "walk your talk" of moderation and unity under the 1 Malaysia slogan but the prime minister merely responded by saying all faiths should not be insensitive to each other and refused to censure Johor authorities.

This led to the Council of Churches Malaysia urging Christian ministers such as Datuk Seri Idris Jala, Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili, Datuk Seri Peter Chin and Tan Sri Bernard Dompok to raise the issue in the Cabinet.

Christians form 9.2 per cent of Malaysia's 28.3 million-strong population.

In recent years, the Christian and Muslim religious communities have been engaged in a tug-of-war over the word "Allah", with the latter group arguing that its use should be exclusive to them on the grounds that Islam is monotheistic and the word "Allah" denotes the Muslim god.

Christians, however, have argued that "Allah" is an Arabic word that has been used by those of other religious beliefs, including the Jews, in reference to God in many other parts of the world, notably in Arab nations and Indonesia.

Conservative Muslim groups have also accused Christians of attempting to convert Malays, resulting in heightened tension between followers of the two religions.

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