

**Non-Muslims not targeted by Kelantan government, says PAS
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By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 11 — PAS secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali today disagreed that non-Muslims are targeted by the PAS-led Kelantan state government in its enforcement of local council laws, saying that they “don’t have to fear”.

Last weekend, The Star had reported that Kelantan enforcement officers had fined four non-Muslims for khalwat (close proximity), a crime under syariah law applicable only to Muslims; but PAS had quickly pointed out the summonses were for indecent behaviour, an offence under local council laws that is enforceable on all.

Mustafa (picture) was asked if non-Muslims would feel targeted by the Kelantan state government even when it is enforcing local council laws and not Islamic laws.

He disagreed, pointing out that such local council laws are enforceable on both non-Muslims and Muslims, while Muslims could also be liable under Islamic laws.

“This is all MCA’s political agenda,” he said at a press conference at the PAS headquarters here.

He said that the indecent behaviour fines, which were issued in October, were being used by the MCA to gain political mileage and attack the Chinese-based party’s political foe DAP ahead of the 13th general election.

“So this thing, MCA just wants to make a political score against DAP.

“For us, this matter that was mentioned incorrectly by The Star, by MCA has created a perception that’s not correct, created confusion; MCA made a statement that’s not accurate,” he said.

He said that allegations of the Kelantan enforcement officers soliciting bribes of RM500 from two of the non-Muslims to “settle” the indecent behaviour fines were not true, saying that reports to the relevant authorities should be made if the claims are true.

“(That’s) not correct, we checked. If true, take legal action. If true, make complaints to police, report to police...We also don’t want if this officer is not right.”

Mustafa also said the local council laws that prohibit indecent behaviour were applicable in the whole of Malaysia under the Local Government Act 1976.

He referred to a controversial incident in Kuala Lumpur in 2003 where a couple were charged under section 8(1) of the Parks (Federal Territory) Bylaws 1981 for hugging and kissing.

He said Kelantan had adopted the 1976 law applicable nationwide in 1986 before PAS started its rule in the state.

He said the Kelantan enforcement officers usually let couples off after giving them advice and only issue summonses for indecent behaviour cases that were serious.

Mustafa repeatedly said at the press conference that the recent indecent behaviour fine cases are not related to syariah law or the syariah court.

Recently, non-Muslim hairdressers in Kelantan were reported to have also been slapped with fines for having customers of the opposite gender, breaching a local council by-law that bars women hairstylists from working on men and vice-versa — sparking a storm over the position of Islamic laws.

In the run-up to the 13th general election, the BN coalition has increasingly tried to discourage non-Muslim voters from voting for Pakatan Rakyat by saying that PAS would implement the Islamic penal code, hudud, and create an Islamic state.

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