

**Now Barisan Nasional component parties want dialogue over Allah issue**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**Oct 14 , 2013**  
**BY LEE SHI-IAN**

The 13 component parties of Barisan Nasional should meet to discuss the Allah issue and give a clear sign where it stands on the matter, said Kedah Gerakan Youth chief Tan Keng Liang.

The Court of Appeal today ruled that the Catholic weekly Herald could not use the word Allah in the publication to refer to God.

Tan, the first Barisan Nasional partyman to respond to the ruling, said the debacle arose after the Home Minister had exercised his discretion under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 to prohibit the Catholic weekly publication, Herald, from using the word Allah.

The issue went to court and the High Court ruled in favour of the publication. However, the Home Ministry and government appealed against the decision, which was then decided by the appellate court.

"The debacle would not have happened in the first place if the views of all 13 components of Barisan Nasional had been sought, especially those from Sabah and Sarawak," Tan said in a statement.

"If the Home Ministry had sought the feedback of all the component parties before making the decision to prohibit Herald from using the word Allah, this debacle could have been avoided."

"It is a fact that Christians, especially those in East Malaysia, have been using the word Allah to represent God for a very long time. The government should take this into consideration."

Tan warned that if the issue was allowed to drag without an amicable solution being found, it could cause friction between the Christian and Muslim communities in Malaysia.

He said the government should always consult the component parties before making any material decisions.

"The views of all communities in Malaysia should be taken into account before any decision is endorsed as national policy," Tan said.

He expressed hope that the Barisan Nasional supreme council would meet soon to discuss the issue and find an amicable solution. - October 14, 2013.

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