

Walk the talk and act the leader, Najib

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Warning Prime Minister Najib Razak of religious animosity between Muslims and Christians having reached "fever pitch", two ex-ministers are demanding that he breaks his "silence".

KUALA LUMPUR: Two former Barisan Nasional federal cabinet ministers have called for Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak to "act like a leader" and "walk the talk" in the face of religious provocations against the Christian community.

Former Law minister Zaid Ibrahim and ex-Plantations and Commodities minister Bernard Dompok were both of the view that Najib must make clear his stand.

In an open letter posted in his blog yesterday, Zaid said Najib should have realised the situation was out of control the moment the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) seized the Malay and Iban bibles from the Bible Society of Malaysia on Thursday – an act, he claimed not carried out anywhere else in the modern world.

"You must remind the country that you are the leader and that there is no one else.

"You must order a stop to such actions and if Jais does not accept your orders than you must act accordingly.

"We are facing an issue of public order and national security and as a leader you recognise this and be prepared to act.

"Leaders who inflame the situation must be hauled up and discipline imposed on the rabble-rousers.

"That is what you must do, because that is what leaders do," he said acknowledging that the "problem" did not start with Najib but under his charge had "reached the stage of implosion" with the animosity between Muslims and Christians reaching "fever pitch".

Zaid said had he still been an MP he would have tabled a motion of no confidence against Najib for the latter's "indifferent silence and total lack (of) of leadership" over the thorny issue.

He further warned Najib that the entire world was watching the developments in Malaysia and how he handled the issue.

"There are maybe just three million Christians in this country but believers and followers of other faiths are also watching how this situation develops."

Be courageous Najib

Meanwhile in KOTA KINABALU, Dompok accused Najib's administration of being "weak" and muddle-headed in the face of religious provocations against the Christian community.

Dompok said the controversial raid by Jais and seizure of over 300 Bibles in Bahasa Malaysia and Iban was a "direct assault on the rights of minorities in the country."

"I am deeply saddened and hurt by the top leadership's lip service on the guarantee of freedom of religion in the country.

"What is happening today are transgressions to the ideals of our founding fathers," said Dompok who is the president of United Pasokmomogun Kadazadusun Murut Organisation (Upko) party, a Barisan Nasional coalition member.

A member of the Federal Cabinet for 14 years until May last year, Dompok does not believe the federal government has been fair or blameless regarding the escalating religious tensions in the country.

"I have felt all along, Putrajaya cannot but abide by the aspiration upon which our founding fathers built this nation. It is not by accident that the first precepts of the Rukun Negara is Belief in God."

"Prime Minister Najib must be courageous and walk the talk, which he is very capable of doing.

"Leaders must steer this nation.... We must learn from the tragedies which have befallen countries worldwide when their leaders took it upon themselves to challenge the very foundation of their existence," he said .

He said the government as well as opposition must ensure that the principles on which the country was formed is not transgressed for political expediency.

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