

**Will it be seditious singing carols containing the word 'Israel', asks
MCA
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MCA has poured scorn on a sedition probe into a student who had liked a Facebook page titled "I love Israel", asking if the authorities will also question those who sing Christmas carols containing "Israel" in the lyrics.

Saying the investigations were "totally ridiculous", MCA Religious Harmony Bureau chairman Datuk Ti Lian Ker asked if those who sang the popular Christmas carol, "The First Noel", would be investigated under the Sedition Act as well.

"Will anyone, including children carollers, singing the chorus of 'The First Noel' which ends with 'Born is the King of Israel' be subject to questioning under the Sedition Act?" he asked in a statement today.

"For Christian pilgrims who have received the green light from Malaysian authorities to make a spiritual pilgrimage to Israel, will they too, be investigated for sedition?"

Penang police chief Datuk Abdul Rahim Hanafi said yesterday that a Form 5 student in the state was being investigated under Section 4(1) of the Sedition Act after he "liked" a Facebook page titled "I Love Israel".

"This investigation is totally ridiculous, more so coming from the police in Penang which has a Jewish cemetery believed to be the oldest in Asia. This will further erode the image of the authorities among the public," Ti added.

"Such action by the police against a top scholar only adds towards victimisation of the student and the perception by non-Muslims regarding selective persecution of religious minorities."

Instead, Ti said, the public expected the police to prioritise combating crime including home burglaries, car thefts, snatch thefts, white collar crimes, kidnappings which have become synonymous with the coastlines of eastern Sabah,

organised crime and others.

The Hindu student, who attends a school in Taman Tasek Mutiara, is now embroiled in controversy after his liking of the page became known to one of his teachers.

The teacher shared it on her Facebook page, criticising the student and attracting criticism and threats from other Facebook users.

There were calls to boycott the student, and one Facebook user said the student should be burned, following which the boy and teacher lodged police reports.

However, the boy said he had accidentally clicked "Like" for the pro-Israel page.

Penang education department director Osman Hussain also said yesterday the teacher responsible for the Facebook posting that led to the student being vilified and threatened on the social network would be served a reminder not to take to Facebook to discuss her students.

"If she does it again, she will be transferred out of Penang," he said today, adding that the department's hands were tied since it was now a police case.

Ti said that despite the department's action on the teacher and its efforts to "reach an amicable solution" to the case, it was worrying that the boy continued to be bullied at school while another student was beaten up after being mistaken for him.

"MCA's fears that the teachers' call to burn the boy will lead to victimisation appear to be coming true," he said.

"It is wrong for any teacher to advocate or preach violence, especially so when we are dealing with young impressionable adolescents. Young minds may get swayed and have a tendency to go overboard with emotions and lash out violence indiscriminately, more so when they find justification in God or their religion."

However, Ti said the criticism against the Malaysian police for the probe did not mean that MCA was not against the atrocities committed by the Zionist regime against Palestinians Muslims and Christians on the Gaza Strip.

"Do not be mistaken. MCA wholeheartedly opposes the atrocities committed by the Zionist regime against Palestinians Muslims and Christians on the Gaza Strip."

"But we urge the authorities and educators to practise common sense and not misuse the boycott call against McDonald's and Starbucks into vigilantism," he added. – August 14, 2014.

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