

Dr M sees no harm in Perkasa's Bible-burning call
Malaysian Insider
29 October 2014
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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today defended Malay rights group Perkasa and its call for Malay-language Bibles to be burned, saying it was not a problem as long as there were good intentions.

The former prime minister, who is also a patron of Perkasa, added that Islam also allowed for the Quran to be burned and not discarded all over the place, or to be stepped on, if it was no longer used.

"We always burn the Quran, when it is old and no longer in use. What is sure is that we cannot throw it around.

"So, burning the Quran with good intentions is not a problem," he said at a press conference after launching "The Extraordinaire Forum 2014" in Bukit Kiara, Kuala Lumpur, today.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the call by Datuk Ibrahim Ali, who is the Perkasa president, to burn Bibles which contained the word Allah.

"They (Perkasa) have to show respect to the Bible, burn it as how they burn the Quran."

Dr Mahathir also defended Ibrahim's statement, saying it was not seditious as claimed by critics, as his intention was not to provoke.

"In other words, he was giving an opinion that could be accepted by Muslims as it was not seditious.

"It was not his intent to provoke tension between Muslims and the non-Muslims."

On Monday, the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) in a statement said Ibrahim's call for Bibles to be burned must be viewed in its entire context.

It added that the Perkasa chief's statement was aimed at the Bibles being distributed to Muslim students of SMK Jelutong in Penang.

"As decided by the court, before a statement is said to have seditious tendencies, the statement must be viewed in the context it was made.

"When studied in its entire context, Datuk Ibrahim's statement is not categorised as having seditious tendencies.

"It was clear Datuk Ibrahim Ali had no intention to create religious tensions, but was only defending the purity of Islam," the statement said.

The AGC stressed that the Bibles distributed outside the school could have threatened the faith of Muslim students if they had read the holy books.

Ibrahim's call last year to burn the Bibles that contained the word Allah sparked outrage among Christian groups and politicians, with critics accusing Putrajaya of double standards in its use of the Sedition Act.

De facto law minister Nancy Shukri also came under fire when she said in her written parliamentary reply on October 7 that Ibrahim had not been charged as he was defending Islam.

She told critics that she replied on behalf of the attorney-general and the Cabinet could not meddle in the issue. – October 29, 2014.

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