

**What more do you want from me, Borders manager asks Jawi**  
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Hounded by the Federal Territory Islamic Affairs Department (Jawi), Borders bookstore manager Nik Raina Nik Abdul Aziz today accused the religious authority of making her a scapegoat.

Asking what more it wanted from her, she said she was just an ordinary citizen and that the civil High Court, Court of Appeal and Shariah High Court had all freed her of any wrongdoing.

"My crime was being a Malay and Muslim store manager who could be a scapegoat for Jawi to show its power.

"I thought the pain and humiliation I suffered for three years ended with the courts' decisions. However, my happiness was short-lived.

"Jawi, please let me go off this oppression," she said in a three-page statement today.

Jawi is appealing against the Federal Territory Shariah High Court's decision on February 26 to discharge Nik Raina for selling a book deemed un-Islamic entitled "Allah, Kebebasan dan Cinta", which was translated from the English Version written by Canadian author Irshad Manji, at the bookstore in 2012.

Aside from the continuing its years-long prosecution of her, chief shariah prosecutor Mohamad Adib Husain has also taken the unusual step of serving the notice of the appeal directly to Nik Raina at her place of work at the Mid Valley Megamall.

Nik Raina in her statement recounted the troubles and humiliation she and her colleagues had suffered since the day Jawi raided her workplace at the Borders bookstore without notice on May 23, 2012.

She said all the staff, both Muslim and non-Muslim, gave their full cooperation to Jawi during the interrogation but were treated roughly.

"Then, after I had given a written statement at the Jawi office to assist investigations, I was arrested. My employer pleaded again and again to Jawi and the authorities to settle the issue amicably.

"But on May 30, 2012, Jawi insisted on charging me at the shariah court for circulating a book that was said to insult Islam," she said.

Nik Raina said she was neither the author nor the owner of the bookstore, and Jawi knew well she had no control to over the kinds of books sold at the outlet, and that there was no fatwa or ban on the book at the time of the raid.

She also recounted her days in court and the humiliation she suffered, each time she

was put in the dock and called "the accused", as well as having her freedom restricted while she was on bail.

Some people had looked at her as one who "insulted" her religion, and had also treated her family with suspicion even though they knew nothing of the issue.

"I was trapped in such a situation and my employer defended me by taking the last option, which was challenging Jawi through a judicial review that exposed Jawi's lame and invalid action," she said.

On March 22, 2013, High Court judge Datuk Zaleha Yusof found Jawi's action against her was unlawful and ordered the department to drop its charges against Nik Raina.

However, the chief shariah prosecutor refused to drop the charges when her case was called in the shariah court on October 7 that year, saying that the prosecution was appealing against the civil court's decision. Her case was postponed.

On December 30 last year, the court of appeal upheld the high court's decision, calling Jawi's action to be unlawful and unconstitutional.

Nik Raina said her lawyer convinced the shariah court judge that it was unjust and cruel to continuously burden someone with endless prosecution, and after considering the impact the whole issue had had on her, she was given a discharge not amounting to an acquittal.

However, on March 9, Jawi filed an appeal against the decision to the shariah court of appeal and three days later, the department served her a notice of the appeal.

"I am surprised...does the shariah chief prosecutor not respect the orders by the civil and shariah courts? What good will victimising me bring? What ills would freeing me bring Jawi and Muslims?"

"Does the Attorney-General's Chambers not advise about the dangers of clashing with the law with what Jawi is doing?" she asked.

Nik Raina said she was tired of dealing with Jawi, which she said was "insisting on something that brings benefit to nobody", and begged the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, the head of Islam in Malaysia, to reprimand the department and to tell it to use wisdom when taking action.

"I am stressed out and I plead to leaders of this country to look at what Jawi is doing, which is making the public, namely Muslims, weary," she said, adding that it was also very unfair that her employer had to keep paying the legal cost to defend her.

"I am embarrassed to keep burdening my boss that way. On my own, I cannot afford the legal fees. My future job prospects are also jeopardised...this is my dilemma, which Jawi will never think about." – March 25, 2015.

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