

**James Masing an unwitting tool of Pakatan Rakyat, says former minister**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**Nov 2, 2014**  
**BY LEE SHI-IAN**

Outspoken Sarawak minister Tan Sri James Masing is unaware that he has become a tool for Pakatan Rakyat, and should not cause confusion with his comments, a former minister said today.

Sarawak minister Tan Sri James Masing. – The Malaysian Insider file pic, November 2, 2014. Sarawak minister Tan Sri James Masing. – The Malaysian Insider file pic, November 2, 2014. Tan Sri Zainuddin Maidin wrote in a blog posting that as the minister responsible for national unity, Masing should be more responsible with his comments.

He said it was unwise for Masing to confuse the Christian community in Sabah and Sarawak by likening the Customs Department's seizure of Christian materials containing the word Allah on October 25 to growing religious extremism in the country.

"The Customs officers in Sepang were merely carrying out their duties as stipulated under the law," Zainuddin, a former information minister, wrote in his blog.

"Masing's accusation creates a perception as if the enforcement officers in the peninsula want to expand the 'Allah' ban to include Sabah and Sarawak."

"However, the Christian community in Sabah and Sarawak have long been allowed to use the word 'Allah' in their holy books," Zainuddin said.

Masing, who is Sarawak's Land Development Minister, had said on Friday that the latest seizure of Christian materials containing the word "Allah" at klia2 in Sepang portends growing religious extremism in the country.

"Moderation and religious tolerance and respect have been cast at the wayside," he had said.

On October 25, Customs officers seized hundreds of books and CDs from Sabah pastor Maklin Masiau at klia2, ostensibly because he did not have an import permit.

Zainuddin chided Masing for making baseless accusations in haste due to his religious sentiments without getting the full facts from the relevant authorities.

"As someone who plays an important role in maintaining national unity in Sarawak, he

should be more responsible and fully understand the issue.

"Instead, Masing makes comments which then creates a negative impression and perception among the Christian community in Sarawak.

"To describe the incident as a portent of growing extremism in Malaysia is out of line and contains elements of sedition," Zainuddin said.

He said what actually transpired was that Masiu was attempting to bring 574 books and 419 compact discs, packed in six boxes, from Medan without an import permit.

"The importing of that much reading and listening material requires an import permit," he said, adding that the seizure was not related to the use of the word Allah.

If Masing was a rational person, he would have taken the trouble to understand the issue first before issuing a hasty statement, Zainuddin said.

He said if the Customs officers were considered to have been extreme in carrying out their duties, then Masing was no different.

"Masing has also shown his extreme side by prioritising the interests of his religion to the extent that he is willing to add fuel to the fire."

Without realising it, Masing has followed the rhythm of the opposition parties by spreading religious and racial extremism from the peninsula to Sabah and Sarawak, Zainuddin added.

"Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem does not need to prevent nationalist elements from entering the state as the real culprit is the enemy within." – November 2, 2014.

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<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/sarawak-minister-masing-an-unwitting-tool-of-pakatan-rakyat-says-former-min#sthash.xLJBhElh.dpuf>