

**If Dr M sanctions Bible-burning, God save this country, says Masing
Malaysian Insider
Oct 30, 2014
BY DESMOND DAVIDSON**

Outspoken Sarawak minister Tan Sri Dr James Masing, who had worked closely with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad when he was Barisan Nasional chairman, said he had lost respect for the man he had once held in high esteem for defending Perkasa's Datuk Ibrahim Ali over the Bible-burning issue.

The Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) president said: "I used to have the highest respect for Tun Mahathir. Now I have second thoughts on his wisdom".

"In the name of Islam, and in defence of the sanctity of Islam, anything goes now," Masing said, referring to Dr Mahathir's comments in defending Malay rights group Perkasa and its call for Malay-language Bibles to be burned.

The former prime minister said it was not a problem to burn the Bibles as long as there were good intentions.

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

"So, burning the Quran with good intentions is not a problem," he said at a public event in Kuala Lumpur.

He said Mahathir seemed to be advocating that there was only one religion in Malaysia, or that Muslims in this country were allowed to practice in any manner they wish without regard to the sensitivities of other religions.

"If a former prime minister of Malaysia sanctions the burning of Bibles, then God save this country."

Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (pic, left), the former president of United Pasokmomogun Kadazan Dusun Murut Organisation (Upko), which is also part of the BN coalition,

questioned Dr Mahathir's reasoning.

"I am totally surprised that Tun Mahathir could come up with a statement like that," said Dompok.

"He says holy books can be burned if they are already old and no longer used. But that is hardly the case here.

"By no stretch of the imagination can you equate the burning of Bibles as propagated by Ibrahim Ali, to the disposal of old books. The intention is totally different."

Sarawak's PKR chief Baru Bian was even more hard-hitting when he said: "He's either senile or intentionally fanning hatred against the Christians".

Baru, a state lawmaker, said if Dr Mahathir is intentionally fanning hatred, then he should be arrested and charged with sedition.

"We will wait whether this time the attorney-general has the guts to do the right thing or will he make excuses again."

Star Sabah president Datuk Dr Jeffery Kitingan said Mahathir's statement is "stupid, provocative and incitive", coming from a "wise, old-man".

"It doesn't help in promoting peace and harmony nor the BN concept of 1Malaysia. It also shows the real Mahathir, a racial extremist and a religious bigot," he said.

Kitingan, a Sabah lawmaker, said Mahathir being a former prime minister, should be promoting peace and harmony and showing a good example to the younger generation.

On Monday, the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC), in defending its decision not to charge the Perkasa chief, said in a statement that Ibrahim's call for Bibles to be burned must be viewed in its entire context.

It said Ibrahim's statement was in response to the reported distribution of Bibles 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 tension, but was only defending the purity of Islam."

Ibrahim's call last year to burn the Bibles that contained the word Allah had sparked outrage among Christian groups and politicians, with critics accusing Putrajaya of double standards in its use of the Sedition Act. – October 30, 2014.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/if-dr-m-sanctions-bible-burning-god-save-this-country-says-masing#sthash.A5WTd2gO.dpuf>