

**Bibles belong to the Christians, Azmin tells Selangor sultan**  
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**BY ANISAH SHUKRY**

The Malay- and Iban-language Bibles seized by the state religious authority in January do not belong to the Muslims and must be returned to the Christians, Selangor Menteri Besar Mohamed Azmin Ali said yesterday.

Azmin told some 1,000 DAP supporters at the party's fund-raising dinner that he informed the Selangor palace of this, with the hope that the prolonged issue will finally be resolved.

"I have brought this matter to the Sultan... how the Alkitab does not belong to the Muslims. They belong to the Christians, whom we must respect," Azmin said in his speech at the MBPJ Civic Hall in Petaling Jaya.

"Islam has never asked its followers to disrupt the harmony of other faiths. It is our duty to respect the practise of the other religions in the country. This is a multi-religious society. This is not Saudi Arabia or Sudan. This is Malaysia. This is Selangor.

"This is why we are working on a formula, and I am confident that if they understand the true Islam, then the Bibles must be returned to the Christians."

He said that as the new menteri besar, he took his position seriously and would look after all Selangor folks, regardless of their background.

He added that Muslims must respect the other faiths in Malaysia, and that the rights of non-Muslims to practise their religion was guaranteed in the Federal Constitution.

The Selangor Islamic Affairs Department seized 321 Bibles during a raid at The Bible Society of Malaysia's (BSM) office in Damansara Kim on January 2, 2014. The raid pushed BSM to shift its operations to Kuala Lumpur. – The Malaysian Insider file pic, October 11, 2014. The Selangor Islamic Affairs Department seized 321 Bibles during a raid at The Bible Society of Malaysia's (BSM) office in Damansara Kim on January 2, 2014. The raid pushed BSM to shift its operations to Kuala Lumpur. – The Malaysian Insider file pic, October 11, 2014. "I don't care what (Perkasa chief Datuk) Ibrahim Ali says... As the menteri besar, I have to defend the people of Selangor, irrespective of race and religion."

Azmin's predecessor, Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, was widely panned by DAP and even his own party, PKR, for not taking a firmer stance over the Bible issue, which had dragged on for months with no resolution in sight.

But, Azmin, who was sworn in as the 15th menteri besar on September 23, told reporters yesterday he had met with the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais) and the Selangor Islamic Affairs Council (Mais) and that the outcome would be made known soon.

Jais seized the 321 Bibles during a raid at The Bible Society of Malaysia's (BSM) office in January.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail ordered the Bibles to be returned to BSM, after the Selangor government under, Khalid, referred the matter to him.

Although Gani concluded that the Bible distributor had done nothing wrong, Mais insisted there were grounds to prosecute it under the Selangor Non-Islamic Religions (Control of Propagation among Muslims) Enactment 1988.

Khalid referred the matter to the Sultan of Selangor who ordered Jais to refer it to the state public prosecutor.

Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah's private secretary Datuk Mohamad Munir Bani said that the sultan's order was in line with the minutes issued by the A-G's Chambers that "Jais has to act in accordance to the law on the issue of the seized Bibles".

"Jais should promptly refer it to the state public prosecutor for it to be brought to court for final determination," the sultan said in the statement.

He also said the issue should not be politicised by any quarter resulting in confusion by proposing solutions which were not based on the law.

But the ruler did not state which court the authorities should refer the matter to, civil or shariah. – November 4, 2014.

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