

Najib calls off plan to table Hadi's bill

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Government abandons plan to table the shariah bill in Parliament after taking into account consensus of BN coalition partners.

PETALING JAYA: The government has called off plans to take over and table the private member's bill to amend the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act, or Act 355, after taking into account the consensus of the Barisan Nasional coalition parties.

"Therefore, it will remain a private member's bill and if it is presented, it will depend on the speaker's instructions," The Star Online quoted Prime Minister Najib Razak as saying today after chairing the BN supreme council meeting at Menara Dato' Onn here.

The bill to amend Act 355 to increase the maximum punishments for shariah offences was first tabled last year by PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang.

Hadi has sought to increase the maximum punishment to 30 years' jail, 100 lashes of the cane, and RM100,000 fine.

However, Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi recently announced that the federal government would take over and table the bill.

Along with those in the opposition, BN component parties had strenuously objected to the bill, which some had interpreted as a way to introduce hudud law in Malaysia.

In an immediate response, MCA president Liow Tiong Lai said it was a good decision by BN.

"Barisan still sticks to the spirit of consensus," he said, adding that MCA strongly opposed the bill.

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