

Kurup: Don't let fringe groups hijack national agenda
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Minister says call to outlaw evangelicalism is unconstitutional and goes against principle of 'wasatiyyah' (moderation) espoused by PM Najib Razak.

PETALING JAYA: Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Joseph Kurup has warned the country to never allow fringe groups to hijack the national agenda by fanning hatred and distrust for their own selfish interests.

He said the recent call to outlaw Christian evangelicalism in Malaysia was unconstitutional and ran counter to the principles of moderation and tolerance that have formed the bedrock of the nation.

The Sabahan, who is MP for Pensiangan, said he condemned the Centre for Human Rights Research and Advocacy (Centhra) and its chief executive Azril Mohd Amin for the idea.

"Ideas and advocacy groups like these are the ones that hasten the tearing up of our social fabric that has held this diverse country together since independence," he said.

"The Federal Constitution clearly spells out that everyone is free to practice their faiths, regardless of backgrounds," he added in a statement.

He said the suggestion to outlaw Christian evangelicalism was akin to robbing a group of its fundamental right and an affront to the sanctity of the constitution.

"That this twisted idea can be put forth during this Muslim holy month makes it even more repulsive," added Kurup, who is in charge of national unity.

He added that Centhra's idea went against the principle of "wasatiyyah" (moderation) espoused by Prime Minister Najib Razak, and which had earned Malaysia international repute for its progressive form of Islam.

"We should continue to build and develop Malaysia into a modern society, blessed with our own unique cultures and diversity to further strengthen our success story," he said.

Azril had said in a column published in Utusan Malaysia on June 15 that the government made the right decision by directing the police to bar the "Jerusalem Jubilee" gathering organised by the All Malaysian-Golden Gate Revival Convocation (AMGGRC) evangelical group in Melaka. The event was slated to be held this weekend.

He claimed that the evangelicalism movement had initiated a new religious outlook 20 years ago that was inclined towards liberties and openness “without limitation”.

He also claimed that even Christian scholars had admitted that the movement’s inclinations had brought negative impact to the growth of the church.

Azril said the government should consider introducing an anti-evangelicalism law to prevent Christian propaganda from becoming dominant.

“It is a fact that the groups that are spreading Christian propaganda to Malaysians, especially Muslims, will keep up their efforts as they believe that there is no effective law that can stop them,” he said.

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