



Majlis Perundingan Malaysia Agama Buddha, Kristian, Hindu, Sikh dan Tao

Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism
Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism

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CONVERSION OF SHOBANAA A/P GENGATHARAN

The Malaysian Consultative Council on Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) is alarmed at the manner in which Shobanaa Devi A/P Gengatharan, a Hindu, was converted to Islam. The family had enrolled Shobanaa as a student at the Institute Pendidikan Guru Kampus Perlis to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to become a teacher. Instead of imparting such knowledge and skills, 3 lecturers from the Institute proselytised and influenced her to convert to Islam, which is contrary to the Institute's role to impart knowledge and to be sensitive to all religions. The family members were totally unaware of the conversion and found out only about 2 months later of her conversion on 15 July 2011.

The lecturers, being responsible for imparting knowledge should in fact have safeguarded the religious, cultural and social interests of the student to ensure unity, peace and harmony among students in this multiracial institution of learning.

The implications of a conversion to Islam are very serious and far reaching. Conversion out of Islam is almost impossible. Non Muslim next of kin are disinherited. Spouses are divorced by Syariah Courts and children converted without the non converting spouse's consent.

All these matters must be urgently addressed. The Cabinet's decision of 21 April 2009 that only one parent cannot convert a child and that the religion of a child under 18 years of age would continue to be his or her religion at the time of birth should be immediately implemented.

Comprehensive legal reforms have been proposed by the MCCBCHST to remedy the current unacceptable situation facing converts and the families of converts. Law reforms are stuck and have not moved despite the government's assurance of action.

As such, until the reforms requested by the MCCBCHST are implemented, the MCCBCHST unanimously decided at its Executive Council meeting on 29 September 2011 that laws must be drafted to provide that a non Muslim cannot be converted to Islam until immediate family members have been given 6 months prior notice and informed in writing of the intended conversion.

MCCBCHST therefore calls on the Federal Government to introduce necessary laws or amendments to remedy the current injustice caused to non Muslims by conversions of one family member to Islam.




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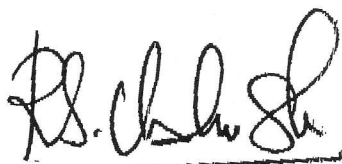
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