



COMMISSION ON SABAH AFFAIRS

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PRESS STATEMENT for immediate use

Compulsory mosques in new housing projects will polarise society

KOTA KINABALU – (Monday) The National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) Commission on Sabah Affairs (COSA) is against the compulsory building of mosques in new housing projects in Sabah as a blanket policy.

This is our stand in response to recent suggestions that the state government exempt premium on land given up by developers for the construction of mosques, and that a site for a surau or mosque be compulsorily allocated in every low and medium cost housing project, before approval for the housing project is given to developers.

NECF-COSA is concerned that such a move may lead to religious polarisation in the state and affect the religious harmony unique to Sabah.

The proposal for such a blanket policy is misguided as there has never been any problem in gaining approval for the building of mosques and suraus. On the other hand, it is the non-Muslim places of worship that have been subject to unnecessary delays in obtaining approval for their building plans and in land acquisition applications.

Sabah has long enjoyed harmony and tolerance among its multi-religious populations in a way that is not experienced to the same degree in Peninsula Malaysia. Some households even have members of different faiths living under one roof.

From a practical standpoint, non-Muslim house buyers may eventually end up having to shoulder the added cost to build the mosques passed on to them by developers.

It is irresponsible for individuals, regardless of their political affiliation, to raise such a controversial proposal in their individual capacity as it concerns the religious harmony Sabahans have long enjoyed. Such matters should only be pursued through the State Legislative Assembly and with prior consultation and consensus with leaders of other religions, housing developers and house buyers.

ENDS

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Commission On Sabah Affairs (COSA)

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