



**Statement by the Commission on Sabah Affairs (COSA)
of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) Malaysia:
Any attack on the Alkitab is an attack on the religious freedom of Bumiputra Christians**

THE increasingly provocative attacks by certain quarters against the Malay-language Bible, the Alkitab, is a direct attack on the rights of bumiputra Christians to their religious freedom as enshrined in their agreements at the formation of Malaysia and in the Federal Constitution.

It is within the mandate of the authorities to investigate Member of Parliament, Ibrahim Ali, for calling on Muslims to seize and burn the Alkitab, according to the full measure of the law to ensure peace and harmony in the country. It is also within the mandate of the authorities to investigate the threatening note sent by a group that calls itself 'Pasukan Bertindak Anti Bible Bahasa Melayu' on its plan to hold a 'pesta' to burn Malay Bibles.

While Christians are peace-loving as our Holy Bible enjoins us to be, we are compelled to speak against these provocations which follow on-going attempts to undermine our religious freedom. One recent episode is the [arbitrary changing of one's religion](#) by the Sabah National Registration Department of bumiputra Christians to Muslims because their names had 'bin' or 'binti'.

It must be remembered that the majority of Christians in Malaysia are Malay-speaking bumiputras from Sabah and Sarawak. They use the Alkitab as their Bible for their liturgical and devotional reading. They use the Alkitab extensively in the Peninsula where many of them work and study.

For Sabah and Sarawak, it must be remembered that both states have guaranteed safeguards in the 18-point and 20-point agreements as conditions to be part of the new nation of Malaysia. The first of these conditions for each state pertains to religious freedom.

In Sabah, we have enjoyed religious freedom since time immemorial. We have even, according to our cultural tradition, built a stone memorial in Keningau to commemorate this safeguard to our religious freedom. We call on all to respect the rights of bumiputra Christians to religious freedom.

To all Christians, we call for patience, forgiveness and love in these trying times. We choose not to retaliate but to pray for our beloved country Malaysia and for those intent on spreading hate.

Issued by Rev Datuk Jerry Dusing, Chairman, the NECF Commission on Sabah Affairs (NECF-COSA) on 25 Jan 2013, Friday, in Kota Kinabalu. For further information, please contact Rev Datuk Jerry Dusing HP 0128282844 or Rev Chin Chi Kiong HP 0128283116