

**CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA
(PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA)**

Address: 26 Jalan Universiti, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Tel / Fax : + 60 3 7957 1457

Email: cfmsia@yahoo.co.uk

9 September 2013

CFM MEDIA STATEMENT

**STOP BASELESS ACCUSATIONS AND CALLS FOR “ACTION”
OVER THE USE OF THE WORD “ALLAH”**

As the hearing date of 10 September 2013 for the appeal by the Government of Malaysia against the decision of the High Court of Malaya to allow The Herald newspaper to use the word “Allah” fast approaches, the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) notes with grave concern the calls by various groups to ‘defend’ Islam from being insulted and threatened.

In particular, we refer to a television programme in which untrue and unsubstantiated accusations were made about so-called Christian plots to convert Muslims, and to the official Friday sermon (*khutbah*) written by JAKIM (the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, or Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia) and delivered on 6 September 2013, which called for “action” (“*tindakan*”) in defence of Islam by Muslims over the use of the word “Allah” for God by Christians, and that such defence was a “holy struggle” (“*perjuangan suci*”).

The issue, then, is whether such calls would become the catalyst and the incitement of reactions which may result in public disorder. Even a cursory examination of these accusations and statements will clearly show that they are emotional and without factual basis.

However, the call for “action” by some Muslims is incendiary and alarming to ordinary Malaysians. Worst of all, there appears to be no action or statement whatsoever from any governmental authority in our nation, calling for calm or even ordering a stop to such stoking of anger and heightening of feelings.

Let it be made clear once again that:

1. The word “Allah” to refer to God is used by about 60% of the approximately 2.6 million Christians in Malaysia. Bumiputra Christians, who only have Bahasa Malaysia as their common language for worship and prayer, have long used the Bahasa Malaysia Bible containing the word “Allah” for God without any uproar, resistance nor objection.

2. The word “Allah” to refer to God has been in use for hundreds of years in various translations of and from the Bible (please refer to the CFM Fact Sheet issued on 16 May 2013).

3. Only in Malaysia is the use of the word “Allah” to refer to God by Christians a problem for Muslims. Christians in the Middle East freely use the word “Allah”. There is no confusion.

4. The repeated accusations that the use of the word “Allah” is a device that is part of a Christian conspiracy to convert Muslims has never been substantiated. Such irresponsible accusations must stop. This is blatant scare-mongering and provoking of religious tensions.

The CFM invites our Muslim sisters and brothers in Malaysia to reflect, understand and appreciate the context of how, when and why Christians use the word “Allah”. This use has carried on for centuries through our shared history without any problem, and we have lived in relative peace and harmony for many years whilst this use has been on-going.

In dealing with the issue of the use of the word “Allah” for God, as indeed with other inter-religious issues, there is a need for the truth, i.e. facts and evidence, to be looked at, instead of an appeal to purely emotional rhetoric or use of base insults, or talk of plots and alleged conversions.

The CFM vigorously calls upon the Malaysian Government, which represents ALL Malaysians, to ensure, uphold and protect freedom of religion in Malaysia. Let not JAKIM be the only voice purporting to speak on behalf of the Government of Malaysia that has said that it represents Malaysians of different faiths and ethnicities.

The CFM requests all Christians to continue to pray for peace and justice. May God bless and protect our beloved nation, and grant peace to all Malaysians.



Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng,
Chairman and the Executive Committee,
The Christian Federation of Malaysia