



PERTUBUHAN BIBLE MALAYSIA (3618/84)
THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF MALAYSIA

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BSM Statement

RETURN THE BIBLES

The Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM) welcomes the call by the Prime Minister on 17 June 2014 for the Majlis Agama Islam Selangor (MAIS) to abide by the decision of the Attorney General not to prefer any charges against the Society in relation to the raid on its premises by officers of the Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS) on 2 January 2014. This is based on the statement by the Attorney General on 11 June 2014 that no offence had been committed by BSM.

This being the case, there can be no further doubt about the status of the 321 copies of the Bible in Bahasa Malaysia, the Al-Kitab, and the Bible in the Iban language, the Bup Kudus, that were seized by the JAIS raiding party. They must be returned without any further delay.

It is both unacceptable and unconscionable for either JAIS, or the Majlis Agama Islam Selangor (MAIS), to insist on holding on to the Bibles any further. Our Federal Constitution in Article 145(3) provides that any prosecution for an offence chargeable in our criminal courts is at the discretion of the Attorney General. Given what the Attorney General had stated last week, it is crystal clear that there will not be any prosecution in this matter. JAIS's insistence that it intends to hold on to the seized Bibles pending a court order for their release pursuant to the Criminal Procedure Code is therefore without foundation. More importantly, it is a total disregard for the provisions of the Federal Constitution and an absolute breach of the rule of law.

It is further absolutely unacceptable for either MAIS or JAIS to speak of disposing of the Bibles. These are not unlawful or subversive documents, but religious books of the Christian community. Under what civil law do they purport to have the authority to even suggest such an act?

It has become fashionable in recent days for public authorities to blatantly ignore the rule of law. Individuals proffer their own understanding and interpretation of the law, devoid of any legal basis. This trend must be stopped if religious harmony is to be preserved in Malaysia.

We call upon both the Federal Government and the Selangor State Government to assure the Christian community in Malaysia of respect for freedom of religion and freedom of religious expression by securing the immediate release of our Bibles, which have been held in unlawful captivity since 2 January 2014.

The Prime Minister's call to MAIS to respect the provisions of the Federal Constitution is timely. No person, public authority or institution can or should be allowed to function above the Federal Constitution. Let us once and for all give genuine meaning and full effect to the right for other religions to "be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation".

Bishop Datuk Ng Moon Hing

President
Bible Society Malaysia