

**CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA
PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA**

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**CFM STANDS WITH RONEEY REBIT'S CONSTITUTIONAL
RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION**

The Christian Federation of Malaysia is dismayed that the fundamental and constitutional rights of Roneey Rebit who wishes to practise his Christian faith was earlier denied by the National Registration Department (NRD) when the department sought to appeal the Kuching High Court decision which ordered the NRD to register the change of religion of Roneey Rebit. Roneey was born a Christian but was converted to Islam at the age of 8 when his parents converted to Islam.

It was in the midst of the election campaign that the Chief Minister of Sarawak Tan Sri Adenan Satem had to step in to obtain the Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia's assurance to Roneey, the people of Sarawak and all Malaysians that the NRD would not be appealing Roneey's case.

Is it not imperative that all parties uphold and respect Article 11 (1) of our Federal Constitution which states "Every person has the right to profess and to practise his religion"?

Why is it so difficult for the NRD to understand this basic constitutional right of all Malaysians till the department had to initiate an appeal against the Kuching High Court's decision to which the State Islamic Council and the State Islamic Department had no objection to Roneey Rebit's application to convert out of Islam?

The CFM urges not only the NRD but all government departments to understand and to abide by the sacrosanct constitutional provisions in our Federal Constitution which provide for and protect the basic rights of the citizens of our nation. There should be no perception of bias by government Ministries, departments and agencies that deal with ALL Malaysians and their racial and religious diversities.

When our constitutional freedom and rights are understood and embedded in the life of our nation then there would be consistency in all policies and actions because it is on the Federal Constitution of Malaysia that this nation was founded in 1963 as the Federation of Malaysia when the then independent states

of Sabah and Sarawak joined with the Federation of Malaya as equal partners of this new nation, Malaysia, with the Federal Constitution as its guiding principle.

We believe that this constitutional approach will provide us the consistency we need in our policies for the good of all Malaysians and will give us a common understanding that we as Malaysians ought to have. If we go against this very foundation of our nation then we cease to exist as a nation bound together by our common constitutional principles.

As a nation we must protect the right of every Roneey Rebit who wishes to decide for themselves their right to profess and to practise the religious faith of their choice. If not, then we ride roughshod over each and every Malaysian's right to decide for themselves their religious faith.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. H. Seng', with a small dot at the end of the line.

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