



Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur

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PRESS STATEMENT

The recent judgment delivered by the Court of Appeal against the Herald newspaper has raised serious concerns to many Malaysians, especially the Christian community. As President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia, I hereby state that that the three Judges were grossly misinformed when concluding that the word 'Allah' was "not the essential or integral part of the religion of Christianity".

The 1st Article of Faith in the Catholic Creed and for all Christians is: "I believe in ONE GOD, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth". Any Christian who denies or modifies this statement of faith, incurs excommunication and would be considered a heretic. It is to be noted that for centuries the Bahasa Malaysia translation and the Arabic equivalent of the ONE GOD, is the sacred word 'Allah', which the Christians have been using peacefully.

Hence, to conclude that the word 'Allah' is not essential to the Christian faith would be a grave denial of the fundamental right of the Bahasa Malaysia speaking Christian community to use this word in prayer, worship services, prayer books, the Alkitab and other publications. This would be tantamount to signalling a form of persecution.

There are thousands of Bahasa Malaysia speaking Christians from Sabah and Sarawak in Semenanjung Malaysia: students in institutes of higher learning, armed forces personnel, police personnel, civil servants and others in the private sector, many of whom reside here with their families. Already more than half of our Parish Churches and Chapels in Semenanjung Malaysia conduct at least one worship service or catechism lessons weekly in Bahasa Malaysia. As committed religious leaders, we have to ensure that we respectfully minister to them in the national language. For this reason then, we do not

accept the statement of these judges and stand in solidarity with other Church leaders who have also emphatically voiced their objection. We are heartened that other religious leaders and organisations have echoed similar sentiments.

We, together with all peoples of goodwill, invoke the good sense of the thousands of Malay brothers and sisters, many of whom have greatly benefitted from the education offered in our Mission schools and are familiar with our belief in God, to allow us to continue peacefully with our use of the sacred word 'Allah'. We urge the Prime Minister to take positive steps to stop the indoctrination of unwitting Malays by individuals and organisations from swinging towards a divisive radicalism.

We continue to pray that God will bless and enlighten all Malaysians to accept one another in unity and diversity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "+ M. Pakiam". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Tan Sri Murphy Pakiam
President
Catholic Bishops' Conference of Malaysia

Dated this 20th October 2013 in Kuala Lumpur