

Perpaduan Anak Negeri (PAN) Sabah

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PRESS STATEMENT

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Native Christians want PM Datuk Seri Najib to act against political Islam

Today we assemble here in Ranau to execute our mamangkis, the clarion call of the Anak Negeri (natives) against extreme political Islam. We will mamangkis again and again, from town to town, kampung to kampung until the voice of the anak negeri is heard by Putrajaya.

The threat comes from political Islam and extremism from Semenanjung and misguided elements in Putrajaya. This has seen the alarming conversions of Anak Negeri, many of whom Bumiputera Christians converted to Islam through intimidation, threat, deception and inducements.

Rest assured we do not see Muslims, and those who become Muslims by choice, as our enemies. We have always embraced them as our brothers and sisters. In Sabah, we are one big family with Christians and Muslims living in peace and harmony side by side even within the same family.

But we want to make it very plain that for the past 50 years we have been in Malaysia, we have been facing threats from extreme political Islam to systematically eradicate our cultural heritage as Christians and our ethnicity as Anak Negeri, the true sons and daughters of Sabah. Some call this a form of genocide.

History teaches us that the controversy over the use of 'Allah' word is not new. Our Alkitab, the Malay language Bible, was banned 33 years ago. It is still banned as evident by one fatwa after another. It is not about one word. It's a long term strategy of extreme political Islam to dominate.

Last month when we mamangkis in Penampang, we presented Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak with a wake up call. Till today, he continues to ignore our cry for action and for justice in the face of extremism. His silence has been taken to mean his continued support for extremist elements who want to further champion political Islam, using oppressive means. PM Datuk Seri Najib must make a stand and silence is not an option.

We have been deceived, intimidated and cheated long enough. PM Datuk Seri Najib must lead the way to assure us that he is not only a PM for the Malays but for all Malaysians. All must be treated fairly and have the freedom to embrace a faith of their choice. We acknowledge Islam is the religion of the Federation, but not extreme political Islam, in ways not envisaged by the framers of our Federal Constitution. This is the supreme law of the nation and not syariah.

Just last month after Christmas, a group from Semenanjung went to Pitas, one of Malaysia's poorest districts, and deceived Christians there to convert to Islam under the guise that the Federal government was giving them some financial aid. The place is so poor that there is no piped water nor

electricity. The place is so remote that no elected assemblyman has visited them in the last 50 years! Makadan Masabu, 54, has lodged a police report. But the police has handed the matter to MUIS, the Sabah Islamic Council. Surely this is a case of *musang masuk reban*; or letting the fox loose in the chicken coop.

This conversion ploy was proudly acknowledged by a Selangor-based Muslim group called 'Islam & Melayu'. Its portal, www.Islamweb.net, said the conversion was done jointly by the Yayasan Ikhlas and the Islamic Affairs Department Sabah on New Year's Day.

History teaches us that the formation of Malaysia was a 'grand design' of our first PM, Tunku Abdul Rahman. History also tells us that Tunku gave his blessings to Tun Mustapha for the mass conversions of Anak Negeri, soon after the formation of Malaysia. Many of such converts were Malay-speaking Bumiputera Christians. This policy has continued till the present.

According to a report in Utusan Malaysia on 25 Feb 2009, the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Sabah, Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah revealed that from 1970, MUIS, the Sabah Islamic Council, has registered 117,579 new converts. History also tells us that conversions were through threats, intimidation, deception as well as inducements.

In some instances, even land was promised. Some from the Murut Christian community in Kemabong claimed that in 1979 under the Berjaya government, they were offered land if they converted to Islam. They did but the land went to someone else. He later sold it to a businessman who also sold it to another, who then sued them for illegal occupation of the land that was promised them as converts to Islam.

Putrajaya is also in collusion in MyKad conversion. The JPN or National Registration Department, a Federal Department under the Home Ministry, re-classify Anak Negeri Christians having 'bin' and 'binti' in their names as Muslims in their MyKad as a routine. JPN will only correct such entries if the Christians so affected can prove to the Syariah High Court that they are not Muslims in the first place!

The Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) Sabah had compiled a list of 162 such cases and their lawyers had handed it over to JPN for remedial action nearly four years ago. JPN replied that all these 162 files have been lost in their office. Until the files are found, these 162 Bumiputera Christians are now officially Muslims.

In another case, the Sabah Council of Churches as well as the Roman Catholic Church of Sabah had complained officially to the Education Ministry last year of a covert ploy to convert under-aged Christian students at the residential Labuan Matriculation College to Islam. They are constantly subjected to various forms of harassment, ridicule and pressure to change their religion. But till now no action has been taken on the complaint.

These are only some of the instances of extreme political Islam through forced conversions. These are not mere rumours. We have submitted the facts but all we get is silence from PM Datuk Seri Najib Razak. We are not attacking him personally. But we question his high office as the Minister of Malaysia. He must act otherwise what kind of PM is this?

To those who are not familiar with our mamangkis, we want them to know this comes from our head hunting days or when our people faced threats and we go to war with this cry. Today, our mamangkis takes a different form. No more do we seek victory with blood other than the blood of Jesus, our redeemer and our Lord over us. The mamangkis is also our victory celebration but we do so in the name of the Lord for the battle belongs to God indeed.

To our Anak Negeri, we want all of us to stand shoulder to shoulder to battle extremism in political Islam. Our victory is not by our strength alone for the battle belongs to Christ alone.

We must learn from history that our enemies may not always be from outside. Our own weaknesses as followers and disciples of Christ, our Lord, is also our own enemy – traitors to our own cause.

Therefore, it serves us well to remember the words of Jesus: “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” (Gospel of Luke 14:27). If we are just contented to be known as Kristian Kulit and are not prepared to be Kristian Sejati or a true follower of Jesus, then we have only ourselves to blame for the misfortune that befalls us. Christ has died on the cross for our sake. It’s our turn to bear our own cross.

The Alkitab teaches us that renewal and revival is assured but it will only come if we are prepared to confess our sins of disobedience to the cross.

Now if we are prepared to bear our own cross, then the time has come for us to mamangkis. Today we mamangkis in Ranau. Today we send yet another signal to PM Datuk Seri Najib and Putrajaya that we, the Anak Negeri of Sabah, reject extreme political Islam in Sabah, a land that belongs to us.
ENDS.

This statement is issued by Perpaduan Anak Negeri (PAN) Sabah in conjunction with the “Mamangkis” celebration held at the St. Paul Anglican Church, Ranau, Sabah. For further information please contact PAN committee member Alex Buguk 019-8138155.