Majlis Perundingan Malaysia Agama Buddha, Kristian, Hindu, Sikh dan Tao

Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism

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MEDIA STATEMENT

PAS Youth Has Missed the Point:

1. **Article 3(1) of the Federal Constitution does not provide for carrying out of Dakwah and conversion**
2. **The concern here is inducement and institutional misuse, NOT Dakwah**

The MCCBCHST refers to the statement by PAS Youth's Dakwah and Islamic Defence Committee chairperson Sukri Omar wherein amongst others, he defended "Dakwah" (religious propagation) activities carried out at higher learning institutions.

In support Sukri Omar cited Article 3(1) of the Federal Constitution which says that Islam is the religion of the Federation. He further cited Article 11(1) which states that *"Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and subject to Clause (4) to propagate it and Article 11(4) which states "may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among person's professing the religion of Islam".*

None of the Articles relied upon by Sukri Omar confers a right to carry out Dakwah activities which are not in accordance with the Federal Constitution and the Law. Article 3(1) clearly does not provide for Dakwah activities to be carried out and "Islam is the religion of the Federation" has been held in Supreme Court decision in CHE OMAR BIN CHE SOH v PUBLIC PROSECUTER [1988]2MLJ 55 to mean *"…in the context means only such acts as relate to rituals and ceremonies".* This clearly rules out Islamic way of life as is generally understood as stated by Supreme Court*: "…On the other hand, if the religion of Islam or Islam itself is an all embracing concept as is normally understood, which consists not only the ritualistic aspect but also has a comprehensive system of life, including its jurisdiction and moral standard, then the submission has a great implication in that every law has to be tested according to this yardstick,"* and the Supreme Court rejected this submission.

Note: This Supreme Court case of CHE OMAR BIN CHE SOH has been approved by the Federal Court decisions of NIK ELIN BINTI NIK ABDUL RASHID and ANOR (2024) and INDIRA GANDHI A/P MUTHO v. PENGARAH JABATAN AGAMA ISLAM PERAK (2018). PAS Youth's attempt to frame public concern over campus conversion activities as an attack on Islam or a challenge to the Federal Constitution is both inaccurate and unhelpful.

Let us therefore be clear. Non-Muslim Malaysians are fully aware of the position of Islam under Article 3 of the Federal Constitution. We do not dispute the right of Muslims to practice their faith, nor do we object to peaceful Dakwah conducted ethically, voluntarily and without coercion.

The real concern is not Dakwah. The concern is the method, setting and possible inducement used to encourage conversion, especially within public educational institutions that are funded by and serve all Malaysians, regardless of religion.

A public university must remain a safe and neutral space for all students. It should not be used, directly or indirectly, as a platform for organized religious conversion campaigns, especially where posters, programmes or incentives may create the impression that conversion is being encouraged through material support, institutional endorsement or social pressure.

Freedom of religion under Article 11 includes the right to profess and practice one's religion. It must also include the right of every student to be free from pressure, inducement or targeted religious persuasion in a public institution. Religious freedom cannot be reduced to the freedom of one group to propagate, while ignoring the rights and sensitivities of others.

PAS Youth is therefore wrong to suggest that questioning such activities amounts to obstructing Islam. No one is objecting to a person freely embracing Islam. What is unacceptable is any attempt to normalize conversion efforts that may exploit financial vulnerability, emotional distress, youth, dependency or the unequal power dynamics within a university setting.

The fact that UPSI has denied approving the poster makes the matter even more serious, not less. It raises legitimate questions: Who prepared the poster? Who circulated it? Was any university facility, name, logo or network misused? Were students approached? Were financial or welfare benefits linked, directly or indirectly, to conversion?

These are matters that require a proper and transparent investigation. Asking for an investigation is not anti-Islam. It is responsible governance.

Malaysia's harmony has always depended on mutual respect. That respect must go both ways. Muslims have every right to practice Islam. Non-Muslims have every right to ensure that their children and communities are not subjected to conversion efforts through questionable methods in public institutions.

The Constitution must be read as a whole and not selectively. Article 3 recognizes Islam as the religion of the Federation, but it also guarantees that other religions may be practised in peace and harmony. The phrase "peace and harmony" must definitely mean something in the context of a multi-religious country.

We therefore urge all parties to return to the core issue: no coercion, no inducement, no misuse of public institutions, and no politicising of legitimate community concerns.

A transparent investigation must therefore be carried out, and clear guidelines established to ensure that public universities remain inclusive, respectful and safe for all Malaysian students.

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Statement Signed by:

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