

Bibles seized by Jais returned to Christians, says Azmin

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The Sultan of Selangor witnessing the handing over of the seized Bibles to Chairman of the Association of Churches in Sarawak, Rev Archbishop Datuk Bolly Lapok. Also present was Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali (in blue baju Melayu). – Pic courtesy of Selangor press secretariat, November 14, 2014. Malay and Iban Bibles seized by the Selangor Islamic Department (Jais) from The Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM) in January were today returned to Christians in Sarawak through the Association of Churches in Sarawak (ACS) in a formal ceremony at the Selangor palace.

Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali tweeted: "An amicable resolution to the issue of the seizure of the Malay language Bibles containing the word Allah."

Along with his tweet, he included a photograph of himself and the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, watching a handover ceremony of a copy of a Bible to ACS chairman, Rev Archbishop Datuk Bolly Lapok.

More than 300 copies of the Malay language Alkitab and the Iban Bible, Bup Kudus, which also contains the word "Allah" were seized from the BSM bookshop in Damansara on January 2.

BSM's then president, Lee Min Choon, and the office manager Sinclair Wong were taken for police questioning and later released.

Jais had said the seizure was done in accordance with the Selangor Non-Islamic Religions Enactment 1988 which prohibits non-Muslims from using the Arabic word for "God".

Jais and the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (Mais) had refused to return the Bibles even after the Attorney-General said there was no basis to charge BSM as the Bibles were not a threat to national security.

The two religious bodies also defied orders by the Pakatan Rakyat-led state government under former menteri besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim to return the Bibles, saying the state administration could not interfere in Jais's and Mais's responsibilities to manage Islamic affairs. – November 14, 2014.

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