



*Saya Anak Bangsa Malaysia's Statement on Friday's Arson Attacks on Churches*

#### **A. Issue of the use of the word “Allah”**

1. On 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2009, the Kuala Lumpur High Court delivered its decision in the matter of the application on the part of the Titular Roman Catholic Archbishop  
of Kuala Lumpur, the publisher of the Catholic weekly,  
*The Herald*  
,  
to  
quash the order of the Home Ministry in banning the use,  
in the  
Bahasa  
Malaysia edition of  
*The Herald*  
, of the word “Allah”.

2. The High Court ordered that the decision of the Home Ministry be quashed, leaving the publisher of the

*The*

*Herald*

free to continue to use the word "Allah" in its

Bahasa

Malaysia edition

.

3. That decision has since been appealed by the Home Ministry to the Court of Appeal and, by consent of the publisher of

*The*

*Herald*

,

the effect of the order of the High Court has been stayed pending the outcome of that appeal.

4. Following the delivery of the decision of the High Court, there have been certain quarters who

have expressed strong unhappiness at the same . Whilst we respect their right to articulate their point of view , we regret that the Court ruling has been politicized by some segments of society, seemingly to further an agenda to cause disharmony amongst our multi-faith , mu  
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t  
i-ethnic population.

5. We further deeply regret that in postulating their grievances to advance their agenda, those quarters have sought to convolute the real issues touching on the constitutional right of expression and to practice one's faith and, with the aid of certain segments of the media, both mainstream and otherwise, contending, amongst others, that the decision would tarnish the sanctity of Islam as the official religion and that the continued use of the word 'Allah' by *The Herald* would confuse Muslims into becoming Christians.

6. We condemn the government, political and community leaders and elected representatives who seem to have condoned and encouraged these efforts to undermine the harmonious co-existence of the people of our nation.

7. We also wish to acknowledge that PAS, PKR and MCA have upheld the constitutional principle of the Rule of Law enshrined in the Rukunegara in concurring with the High Court's ruling on the use of the word "Allah".

## **B. Arson Attack on Churches**

8. We strongly condemn the attacks on the three churches in Selangor and one in Kuala Lumpur today.

9. We note with appreciation the condemnation of these acts by Khairy Jamaludin as head of the Barisan National Youth and the speedy action taken by Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim, Menteri Besar of Selangor in visiting one or more of the affected churches and appealing for calm.

10. In this regard we call upon all Malaysians to remain calm and not to fall into the trap of those who have as their aim the disruption of peace and harmony amongst the people.

11. We call upon all political parties on both sides of the divide to do the same.

### **C. Right to Peaceful Assembly**

12. We strongly support the people's democratic rights to peaceful assembly as enshrined in our constitution.

13. We would like to record our appreciation to the protesters at several mosques in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor for exercising their constitutional rights without resorting to any excess or violence.

## **D. Our Collective Responsibility**

14. We call upon all Malaysians to come together collectively:

- to condemn and send the message as a people that we will not tolerate acts of desecration of any places of worship, now and in the future;
- to make every effort to take the truth of the issues related to the use of the word "Allah" and the Court ruling to the rakyat.

15. In this regard, we call upon all political parties on both sides of the divide to join civil society in this endeavour to engage and educate our people.

8<sup>th</sup> January 2010