

THE MALAYSIAN CONTOURS OF FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

NEGOTIATING BETWEEN THE SACRED AND SECULAR

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The Royal Lake Club, 9 March 2024



FEDERAL COURT'S DECISION IN NIK ELIN'S PETITION

LANDMARK DECISION

- Petitioners: Puan Nik Elin Zurina Nik Abduk Rashid & Tengku Yasmin Natasha Tengku Abdul Rahman
- Respondent: State Government of Kelantan
- The Federal Court declared that several provisions/sections of the Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code (I) [Enactment 14] Enactment 2019 are null and void for being in violation of the Federal Constitution.

FEDERAL COURT'S DECISION IN NIK ELIN'S PETITION

- The judgment illustrates the fundamental principle that our Federal Constitution is supreme. Every organ of government, be it federal or state, must abide by the Constitution.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Article 11, Clause (1) states –

Every person has the right to profess and practise his religion and, subject to Clause (4), to propagate it.

ISLAM – RELIGION OF THE FEDERATION

Article 3 provides that –

Islam is the religion of the Federation but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony.

MALAYSIAN POPULATION VIS-À-VIS RELIGION

- Population: 32.2 million (midyear 2019 estimate).
- According to the most recent census in 2010 –
 - **61.3%** practises Islam;
 - **19.8%** practises Buddhism;
 - **9.2%** practises Christianity;
 - **6.3%** practises Hinduism; and
 - **1.3%** practises Confucianism, Taoism, or traditional Chinese philosophies and other religions (include animists, Sikhs, Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Church of Jesus Christ), and Bahai'as).

CHRISTIANITY VIS-À-VIS SABAH & SARAWAK

- Two-thirds of the country's Christian population inhabit the East Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF – UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE



- Universal human right:

**Universal
Declaration of
Human Rights**

**International
Covenant on
Civil and
Political Rights**

EVIL OF RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

- Discrimination against religious and belief communities, as with all forms of discrimination, causes suffering, spreads division, and contributes to a climate of fear, intolerance, and stigmatization.

SUPREMACY OF THE CONSTITUTION

- All legislative's and executive's acts must abide by the Constitution.
- This principle is enshrined in Article 4 of the Federal Constitution –

(1) This Constitution is the supreme law of the Federation and any law passed after Merdeka Day which is inconsistent with this Constitution shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

ISLAMIC PRACTICES ARE SUBJECT TO THE CONSTITUTION

- Therefore, the practices of the religion of Islam as well as that of other religions are subject to the provisions of the Federal Constitution. See Article 3 Clause (4) of the Federal Constitution.

IS MALAYSIA AN ISLAMIC STATE OR A SECULAR STATE?

- 1 Constitution of Pakistan – declares that Pakistan is an Islamic State
- 2 Constitution of India – declares that India is a Secular State
- 3 Malaysian Constitution – silent

IS MALAYSIAN AN ISLAMIC STATE?

- True test is not based on the population.

IS MALAYSIAN AN ISLAMIC STATE OR A SECULAR STATE?

- Question to ask –

Whether the government of Malaysia is run on Islamic principles; or whether the Constitution of Malaysia is based on Islamic principles; or whether the laws of Malaysia are based on Islamic principles?

IS MALAYSIA AN ISLAMIC STATE OR A SECULAR STATE?

- Answer:

On the basis of Constitution, Malaysia is a secular state.

TUN MAHATHIR'S ERRONEOUS STATEMENT

- Tun Mahathir in 2001 erroneously declared Malaysia to be an Islamic State.



REID COMMISSION



Report of the Reid Commission charged with the task of drafting our Constitution in 1957:

In the memorandum submitted by the Alliance it was stated the religion of Malaya shall be Islam. The observance of this principle shall not impose any disability on non-Muslim nationals professing and practising their own religion and **shall not imply that the State is not a secular State.**

TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

- Malaysia's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, in a speech in 1959 before the Federal Legislative Council –

I would like to make it clear that this country is not an Islamic state as it is generally understood, we merely provided that Islam shall be the official religion of the State.



SUPREME COURT CASE OF *CHE OMAR BIN CHE SOH*

- An appeal against a death sentence for drug trafficking and possession of firearms.
- Argument: since Islam is the religion of the Federation, the imposition of the death penalty was unconstitutional, being contrary to Islamic injunction.
- The Court rejected the argument.



SUPREME COURT CASE OF *CHE OMAR BIN CHE SOH*

The Court:

- the development of the law by the British had the effect of transforming the legal system into a secular one.
- the constitutional declaration that Islam is the religion of the Federation did not mean that laws passed by Parliament must be imbued with Islamic religious principles.
- that would be contrary to the constitutional and legal history of the Federation and also to the Civil Law Act 1956 that provides for the reception of English common law.

NIK ELIN'S CASE



- The Federal Court said:

“[116] ... the structure of our Federal Constitution that leans in favour of secularity ...”

**10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD
MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A
SECULAR STATE**

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

FIRST FEATURE

- While Islam is declared to be the religion of the Federation, the Constitution stipulates that its position is subject to the provisions on fundamental liberties, citizenship, the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers in Malaysia, federal-state relations, finances, elections, public services, etc. [see Article 3(4)]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

SECOND FEATURE

- The Constitution proclaims itself to be the supreme law of the Federation, as opposed to the holy book of any religion. [see Article 4(1)]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

THIRD FEATURE

- The Constitution does not create a Head of the religion of Islam for Malaysia.

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

FOURTH FEATURE

- The Constitution guarantees the Rule of Law and Separation of Powers, that is to say, Malaysia's laws are made, executed upon and interpreted by three secular institutions, namely, Parliament, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (generally, meaning the Cabinet or any other person as determined by Parliament) and the Courts respectively. [see Articles 39, 44 and 121]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

FIFTH FEATURE

- The Constitution confirms that decisions in Parliament are made by a majority; a basic feature of Democracies, and not Theocracies. [see Article 62(3)]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

SIXTH FEATURE

- The Constitution regards “written law” and “common law” as the applicable laws in Malaysia. Substantive Islamic law is not considered “law” under the present legal framework; it must be legislated for. [see Article 160 and 74(2)]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

SEVENTH FEATURE

- The creation of key religious authorities i.e. the Majlis Agama, the Mufti and the Syariah courts, are all pursuant to laws passed by a secular institution i.e. the State Legislative Assembly. [see Item 1 of State List]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

EIGHTH FEATURE

- All Ministers of Cabinet, members of the Houses of Parliament and Judges take an oath of office which requires them to “preserve, protect and defend” the Constitution, as opposed to any religion. [see [Sixth Schedule](#)]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

NINTH FEATURE

- The Constitution guarantees freedom of religion for all persons. [see Article 11(1)]

10 FEATURES THAT UPHOLD MALAYSIA'S POSITION AS A SECULAR STATE

TENTH FEATURE

- There is no religious qualification with respect to office(s) in Government; thus, a person of any religious affiliation can be a member of the Legislature, Executive or Judiciary in Malaysia. Even a non-Muslim can be the Prime Minister.

OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS

PROFESSOR R. H. HICKLING

- ...as a general proposition Muslim law cannot be regarded as “the law of the land.” Islam is indeed the religion of the Federation, just as the Protestant Church is the established Church of England: but in each case, the state is a secular state, and it is wise to keep religion out of law (as well as out of politics) for the two mix ill.

WHAT DO THE WORDS 'ISLAM IS THE RELIGION OF THE FEDERATION' MEAN?

SHERIDAN AND GROVES

The learned authors are of the view that the words 'Islam is the religion of the Federation' may impose an obligation on the participants in any federal ceremonial to regulate any religious parts of the ceremony according to Muslim rites.

MATTERS PERTAINING TO ISLAM IS A STATE MATTER

- Only the State Legislatures could make laws on matters pertaining to the Islamic religion.
- The Parliament of the Federation could not make such laws; except for the Federal territories.

COURT SYSTEM

- In Malaysia we have 3 types of Courts –

The Civil Courts

The Syariah Courts

The Native Courts of Sabah and Sarawak

CIVIL COURTS DIRECTLY ESTABLISHED UNDER CONSTITUTION

- The superior Civil Courts (namely, the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Federal Court) are directly established under the provisions of the Federal Constitution.

[Part IX of the Federal Constitution (Article 121 – Article 131A)]

SYARIAH COURTS ESTABLISHED UNDER STATE LAWS

- The Syariah Courts are not directly established under the provisions of the Federal Constitution. They are merely established under the respective State laws pursuant to the State List under the 9th Schedule of Federal Constitution.

LIMITED JURISDICTION OF SYARIAH COURTS

- the State legislatures are empowered to establish Syariah courts.
- the State legislatures are empowered to legislate on Islamic in regard to such matters as succession, marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption, legitimacy, guardianship, wakaf, religious trusts, zakat (or similar Islamic religious revenue), mosques and the creation and punishment of offences by persons professing the religion of Islam against precepts of Islam.
- the Syariah court is to have jurisdiction only over persons professing the religion of Islam and in respect only of the matters that have been enumerated under the State List and legislated upon by State laws.

FURTHER LIMITATION ON SYARIAH COURTS

- A Syariah Court has no jurisdiction to deal with Islamic Enactment offences unless the Syariah Court has been conferred by federal law to deal with such offences (see *Item 1 of the State List*).
- Hence, Parliament passed in 1965 the Syariah Courts (Criminal jurisdiction) Act 1965 (Act 355).

FURTHER LIMITATION ON SYARIAH COURTS

- Parliament must first pass an Act to specify what kind of offences are deemed by Parliament to be offences that could be conferred upon the Syariah Courts the jurisdiction to deal with.
- Otherwise, such offences could only be dealt with by the Magistrates or Sessions Court.

FURTHER LIMITATION ON SYARIAH COURTS

- The intention of the restrictive provision in Item 1 of the State List is for Parliament to exercise control over the State Legislatures in creating offences and over the Syariah Courts in exercising jurisdiction over the same.
- This explains the need for Parliament to pass in 1965 (albeit, after a delay of 8 years!), the Syariah Courts (Criminal jurisdiction) Act 1965 (Act 355).

ARTICLE 121 (1A) OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

- On 10 June 1988, Parliament amended Article 121 of the Federal Constitution by inserting Clause (1A) that reads –

(1A) The Courts referred to in Clause (1) shall have no jurisdiction in respect of any matter within the jurisdiction of the Syariah courts.

REASON FOR INSERTING ARTICLE 121 (1A)

- The late Tan Sri Professor Ahmad Ibrahim in his essay ‘The Amendment to Article 121 of the Federal Constitution: Its Effect on Administration of Islamic Law’ [1989] 2 MLJ xvii pointed out:

One important effect of the amendment is to avoid for the future any conflict between the decisions of the Syariah courts and the civil courts which had occurred in a number of cases before.

CLARIFICATION ON LIMITED JURISDICTION

- The learned Professor went on to clarify –

The Syariah Courts shall only have jurisdiction over persons professing the religion of Islam and in respect only of the matters included in the paragraph. **The Syariah courts will therefore not have jurisdiction where one of the parties involved is a non-Muslim.** For example, in a case of custody of children, if the mother is a non-Muslim but the father is a Muslim, the matter can still be brought to the civil court and disposed of therein.

MISCONCEPTION ON THE PART OF SOME LAWYERS AND JUDGES

- Misconception: any dispute between parties having an Islamic law element in it must be resolved at the Syariah Courts and not at the civil courts.
- This is not intended to be the case.
- Correct interpretation: The Syariah court is to have jurisdiction only –
 - (i) over persons professing the religion of Islam; and
 - (ii) in respect only of the matters that have been enumerated under the State List and pursuant to which jurisdiction has been conferred upon the Syariah Court by State laws and, where appropriate, by Federal law.

SYARIAH COURT SUBJECT TO JUDICIAL REVIEW BY CIVIL COURT

- Decisions of the Syariah Courts are subject to judicial review by the Civil Courts.
- Ruled by the High Court case of *Kadar Shah* and the Federal Court cases of *Indira Gandhi v The Director of Islamic Affairs Perak* and *Iki Putra Mubarak*.

THE CASE OF *INDIRA GANDHI* AND THE DOCTRINE OF BASIC STRUCTURE

- Our secular system of Government is one of the basic structures of the Malaysian Constitution.

THE CASE OF *INDIRA GANDHI*



- Concerns the conversion of a Hindu Child to Islam.
- High Court held that the conversion was not in accordance with the procedure as prescribed by the relevant Syariah Enactment of Perak.
- Court of Appeal by majority reversed that decision on the ground that the civil courts had no jurisdiction to deal with the subject matter of the judicial review application.

DECISION OF THE FEDERAL COURT

- Federal Court reversed the decision of the Court of Appeal and restored the decision of the High Court.
- Federal Court ruled that the conversion was unconstitutional.

DECISION OF THE FEDERAL COURT AND THE BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

- The Federal Court held that:
 - The principle of separation of powers is part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
 - The judicial power of the Federation is part of the basic structure of the Constitution. As such, the constitutional amendment Act that amended Article 121 in 1988, which curtails and purportedly eliminates the judicial power vested in the judiciary, is void.

DECISION OF THE FEDERAL COURT AND THE BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

- The Federal Court held that:
 - The power of judicial review forms part of the basic structure of the Constitution. Any attempt by Parliament to oust or exclude the power of judicial review is ineffective.
 - The features of the basic structure cannot be abrogated or removed by a constitutional amendment.

DECISION OF THE FEDERAL COURT AND THE BASIC STRUCTURE DOCTRINE

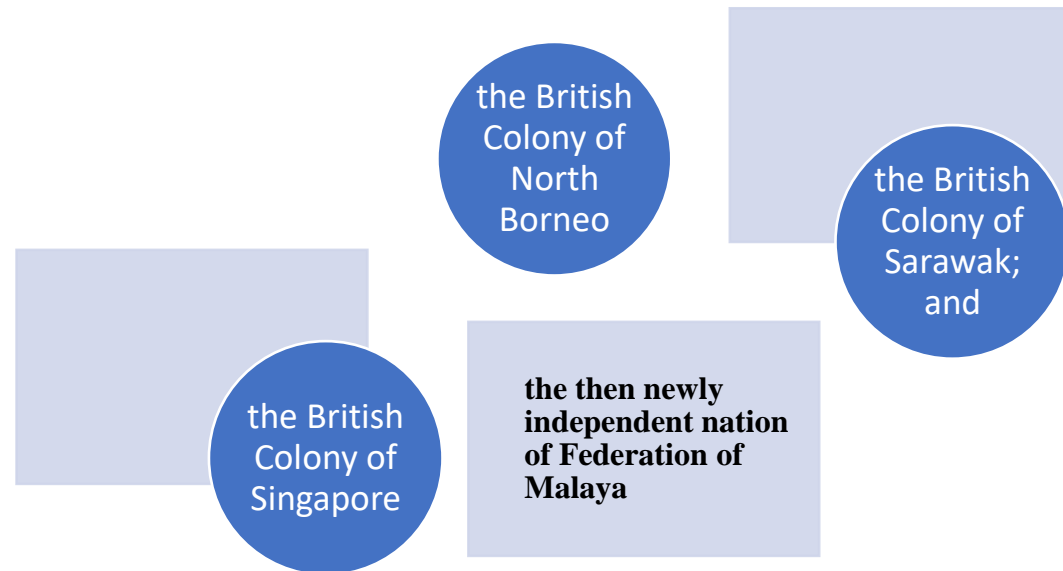
- The Federal Court held that:
 - Since the power of judicial review is part of the basic structure of the Constitution, article 121(1A) cannot and does not prevent the ordinary courts from reviewing the acts of Islamic institutions established under statute to ascertain whether they have acted ultra vires their statutory powers, including erroneously treating a matter as falling within the jurisdiction of a Syariah Court when that matter does not.

OUR SECULAR CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE CANNOT BE AMENDED BY PARLIAMENT

- By reason of the doctrine of basic structure, there is no possibility of our Parliament amending the Federal Constitution to turn Malaysia from a secular State into an Islamic State.

ISLAM: THE CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION IN SABAH AND SARAWAK

- In the early 60s, the Governments of the United Kingdom and Federation of Malaya came to the view that the formation of Malaysia is desirable with the ‘amalgamation’ of the following four political entities:



COBBOLD COMMISSION

- Cobbold Commission was established to, among others, ascertain the views of the peoples of North Borneo (later called 'Sabah') and of Sarawak on the question of the two British Colonies joining in to form Malaysia and to make recommendations.
- The issue of the right to the freedom of religion became of great concern.

GOVERNMENT PAPERS ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION

- In early 1962, the Colonial Government of Sarawak and the Colonial Government of North Borneo issued their respective “Government Papers” to announce the setting up and work of the Cobbold Commission.
- These Government Papers assured the peoples of Sarawak and North Borneo on the matters which are considered important to them, in particular, with regard to the position of Islam and their freedom of religion.

MALAYSIA SOLIDARITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE: MEMORANDUM OF MALAYSIA

- Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee on 3 February 1962 submitted a document called “Memorandum on Malaysia”.
- At paragraph 13 of this Memorandum it states as follows:

The Committee directed a great deal of attention to the question of Islam as the religion of the Federation. It is satisfied that the acceptance of Islam would not endanger religious freedom within Malaysia nor will it make Malaysia any less secular. The present Constitution of the Federation of Malaya, which would serve as the basis for the new Federation has adequately guaranteed that other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.

THE COBBOLD COMMISSION REPORT

DEEP ANXIETIES OVER ARTICLE 3

- The report acknowledges the deep anxieties over the position of Article 3 of the Federal Constitution which provides that Islam is to be the religion of the Federation, that stemmed from the concern over the prospect of Malay/Muslim domination.
- The Commission recorded the responses of Muslims and non-Muslims to Article 3.

THE COBBOLD COMMISSION REPORT

- Given the assurance by the Memorandum on Malaysia, the Cobbold Commission made the following recommendation in its Report:

Taking these points fully into consideration, we are agreed that Islam should be the national religion for the Federation. We are satisfied that the proposal in no way jeopardizes freedom of religion in the Federation, which in effect would be secular.

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE (“IGC”)

- Given the task to work out the constitutional arrangements for the new Malaysian Federation including safeguards for the special interests of Sabah and Sarawak.
- Comprised representatives of the 3 entities (i.e. Sarawak, North Borneo and the Federation of Malaya).

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE (“IGC”): AGONG NOT TO BE THE HEAD OF ISLAM FOR BORNEO STATES

- The Report of the IGC recommended in paragraph 15(1) that that the YDPA should not be Head of Islam for the Borneo States:

*No amendment is required to Article 3(1), which provides "Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation". As in the case of Penang and Malacca (Article 3(2)) the Heads of State in the Borneo States should not be the Head of the Muslim religion in the State; **but Article 3(3) should be left unamended so as not to confer on the Yang di-Pertuan Agong the position of Head of the Muslim religion in the Borneo States.***

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE (“IGC”): AGONG NOT TO BE THE HEAD OF ISLAM FOR BORNEO STATES

- Nonetheless, in 1976 Article 3(3) was amended to make the Yang di-Pertuan Agong the Head of Islam for Sabah and Sarawak.

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE (“IGC”) : RESTRICTION ON RIGHT OF PROPAGATION

- Paragraph 15(2) of the IGC provides for the control or restriction of propagation of religion –

*(2) The guarantee for religious freedom contained in Article should be retained. As regards Article 11(4) which provides “State law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the Muslim religion”, it was agreed that the Constitutions of the Borneo States could properly provide that a law having the effect described in Article 11(4) **would need to be passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the total membership of the State Legislative Assembly.** [See e.g. Art. 26(6) of Sabah Constitution.]*

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE (“IGC”)

LIMIT POWERS OF CONFERENCE OF RULERS

- Paragraph 15(4) of the Report of the IGC limits the powers of the Conference of Rulers to extend religious observances to the Borneo States:

Article 38(2)(b) and (6)(d), which deals with the functions of the Conference of Rulers relating to the extension of religious acts, observances and ceremonies to the Federation as a whole, should not apply to the Borneo States.

MALAYSIAN CONSTITUTION OF 1963

- Article 3 of the Federal Constitution of Malaya of 1957 was agreed to by the Colonies of North Borneo and Sarawak in the Malaysian Constitution of 1963.

MALAYSIAN AGREEMENT OF 1963

- The Report of the IGC eventually became part of the Malaysia Agreement of 1963 (see Article VIII of the Malaysia Agreement of 1963).

POSITION OF ISLAM IN SABAH & SARAWAK

Sabah

- Islam has been formally declared as the religion of the State by Article 5A of the Sabah State Constitution via the Constitution (Amendment) Enactment, 1973.

Sarawak

- Has not passed a similar law. However, the Sarawak Constitution had been amended in 1976 by inserting Article 4A declaring the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong to be the Head of the Religion of Islam in Sarawak

SOME CHALLENGES TO FREEDOM OF RELIGION

RIGHT TO PROPAGATE

- Article 11(4) of the Federal Constitution limits proselytizing. It reads—

State law and in respect of the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya, federal law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam.

- In practice, the State Legislature **prohibits** the propagation of non-Islamic religion rather than merely controls or restricts it.

CAN A MUSLIM PERSON CONVERT TO ANOTHER RELIGION?

- A controversial and sensitive question in Malaysia.
- Art. 11 Clause (1) provides that –

Every person has the right to profess and practise his religion and, subject to Clause (4), to propagate it.

CAN A MUSLIM PERSON CONVERT TO ANOTHER RELIGION?

- In my opinion, by virtue of the above Clause (1) of Article 4, a person, including a Muslim, has the right to practise any religion of his choice, including the right to change his religion.

CAN A MUSLIM PERSON CONVERT TO ANOTHER RELIGION?

- In Malaysia, when a Muslim person renounces his religion and embraces another religion, he is said to commit the sin of Irtidad or Murtaḍ. That is, apostacy.
- Among Muslims, committing apostasy is a big sin; it strikes at the root of the faith or akidah.
- The subject of Murtaḍ or apostacy is a highly sensitive subject.

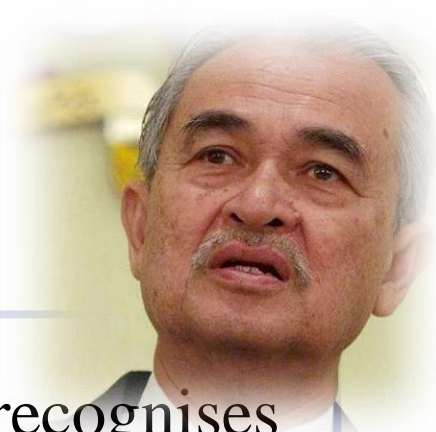
CAN A MUSLIM PERSON CONVERT TO ANOTHER RELIGION?

- I appreciate the sensitivity of the subject of apostasy; and that for a Muslim person or for the Muslim community, to renounce the Islamic faith is a big NO for Muslims. As that is against the tenets of the faith.
- As a Muslim, I subscribe to the belief of my faith.
- But I am here to discuss the subject of apostasy purely from a constitutional law point of view and not from a theological standpoint.
- The sacred must be distinguished from the secular.

CURRENT STATE LAWS

- State laws prohibit a Muslim person from changing his religion or from becoming a non-believer. If he/she does renounce the religion of Islam, he/she is said to commit the offence of apostacy and is punishable by imprisonment or fine.
- Is such a provision consistent with Art 11(1) of the Federal Constitution?
- In my view, it is not.

PROHIBITION ON PRACTICING SHI'A ISLAM



- Malaysia is a party to the Amman Declaration of 2004 that recognises Shi'a Ja'fari and Shi'a Zaydi as two of the 8 recognised Islamic practices.
- For the Amman Declaration's endorsement, Malaysia's delegation was led by no less a person than the then Prime Minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.
- Nonetheless, a fatwa issued in 1996 by the National Fatwa Committee for Religious Affairs recognizing Sunni Islam as “the permitted form of Islam in Malaysia, and imposing a prohibition on the proselytizing, promulgation or professing of Shi'a beliefs, including the distribution of any electronic or print resources.”
- Many Shi'a followers have been arrested for merely attending closed religious gatherings.

REPORT OF UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

- In 2017, the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Karima Bennoune, reported that Shi'a communities are unable to worship freely and are subject to “obstacles in carrying our rituals which are both cultural and religious.”

**PROHIBITION ON THE USE OF THE WORD ALLAH BY
NON-MUSLIMS**

CASE OF JILL IRELAND

- In Jill Ireland the High Court quashed the Home Minister's directive of 1986 that imposed a total ban on the use of the word 'Allah' in all Christians publications in Malaysia.
- The High Court held that no evidence that the use of the word "Allah" in Christian publications had led to public disorder.
- The High Court further ruled that the prohibition violated Jill Ireland's right to freedom of religion under the Federal Constitution and her right to equality under Art 8.

CONCLUSION

- Malaysia is a secular State.
- The Article 3 Clause (1) declaration that Islam is the religion of the Federation merely places Islam on a higher pedestal as compared to other religions for ceremonial purposes.
- Any discourse on Syariah law and matters pertaining to religion must be conducted in a civil and dignified manner, in an open-hearted manner, and with good measure of tolerance.

CONCLUSION

- Muslims should not label another Muslims as ‘liberals’ or ‘pluralists’ just because some Muslims opt to practise as moderate Muslims or have a different view on the practice of Islam.
- In any discourse on religion, emotions and irrationality must be put aside. The sacred must be distinguished from the secular.
- Every Malaysian has a duty to preserve and protect the country as a secular nation as enshrined in the Federal Constitution, and as envisaged by our forefathers in 1957 and in 1963.

THANK YOU