



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

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

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MCCBCHST MEDIA STATEMENT:

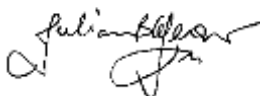
PLEASE CONSULT US BEFORE SETTING UP A UNIT LIKE UNIFOR

1. The Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism & Taoism (MCCBCHST) refers to a report in the Malay Mail (Friday 10 Jul 2020 08.32 PM MYT- by Sulok Tawie) where it was stated that the Minister of National Unity Datuk Halimah Mohamed Sidique had met with the Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas and amongst matters discussed was the role of the Sarawak's Unit For Other Religions (UNIFOR).
2. The Deputy Chief Minister of Sarawak had briefed the Minister about the role played by UNIFOR in enhancing solidarity amongst Sarawakians. At the same meeting the UNIFOR Director stated that since 2016 the Sarawak State Government had enabled 520 religious projects to be carried out by providing a grant of RM 115 million. The Malay Mail report further stated that the Minister of National Unity said that her Ministry wants to adopt and adapt the concept of the UNIFOR unit into our Community Harmony Committee. MCCBCHST applauds the effort of the Minister to learn from Sarawak on how to live harmoniously, embracing and celebrating our diversity. A UNIFOR like unit is crucial for Malaysia where religious issues can be resolved by religious leaders amicably through dialogue.

3. The MCCBHCST is of the view that on such an important matter as the setting up a UNIFOR like unit for Non-Muslims, the MCCBCHST as the religious stakeholders should be consulted as to the unit's structure and composition. This is because all religions enjoy freedom of religion and by Article 11(3) of the Federal Constitution "Every religious group has the right (a) to manage its own religious affairs". This right forms part of the basic structure of the Constitution and as such cannot be violated.
4. The Community Harmony Committee must be separate from this proposed UNIFOR unit as the Community Harmony Committee is under the Ministry and has leaders from different religions on board. Its precursor is the "Jawatankuasa Mempromosikan Persefahaman Dan Keharmonian Antara Penganut Agama" (JKMPKA). This JKMPKA was set-up by the cabinet earlier under the Department of National Unity and National integration and MCCBCHST members were part of this earlier committee together with muslim religious leaders and others.
5. Any unit or body like UNIFOR to be set-up for Non-Muslims must take cognizance of Article 11.3. that is, of the right of each religious group to manage its own affairs. It thus must be managed by Non-Muslims and in case of Sarawak it comes under Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister.
6. We, therefore appeal to the YB Minister of National Unity to call for a meeting with MCCBCHST for consultations before a unit/ body like UNIFOR is set-up.

-Ends -

Statement issued and endorsed by:



Archbishop Julian Leow Beng Kim
President



Sardar Jagir Singh
Deputy President



Datuk R S Mohan Shan
Vice President



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Venerable Sing Kan
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