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## 12 to get counselling: Sultan

KUALA LUMPUR: Islamic authorities will provide counselling to a dozen Muslims to “restore their belief and faith” after they attended a community dinner at a church hall, Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah said, Monday.

The case has triggered worries among officials in Muslim-majority Malaysia that some non-Muslims were trying to convert Muslims. Proselytising of Muslims is punishable by prison terms of various lengths in most Malaysian states.

The Sultan said Islamic officials who inspected a dinner at a Methodist church hall in early August found “evidence that there were attempts to subvert the faith and belief of Muslims.”

The Sultan did not elaborate on the evidence or mention Christians in his statement, but said the evidence was “insufficient for further legal actions to be taken.”

Church officials had repeatedly denied any proselytisation occurred at the dinner, which they described as a multiethnic gathering to celebrate the work of a community organisation that worked with women, children and HIV patients. Christian leaders had also criticised Islamic state enforcement officials for what they called an unauthorised raid.

“We command that (Islamic officials) provide counselling to Muslims who were involved in the said dinner, to restore their belief and faith in the religion of Islam,” Sultan Sharafuddin said.

Rev. Hermen Shastri, the general secretary of Malaysia’s Council of Churches, said the sultan’s statement “brings closure to the case.”

“No one should speculate or aggravate the situation further,” he told *The Associated Press*.