

Headline **Church leaders slam raid by state Islamic department**
Date **05 Aug 2011**
MediaTitle **The Star**
Section **Nation**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily**
Circ / Read **304,904 / 1,026,812**

Language **English**
Page No **6**
Article Size **176 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **3,195**
PRValue **9,585**



Church leaders slam raid by state Islamic department

PETALING JAYA: Church leaders have come out to strongly condemn the raid by Jais.

Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) senior pastor Dr Daniel Ho, who heads the church at the Dream Centre in Petaling Jaya, said the trespassers had subjected the dinner guests to undue harassment.

The event was organised by non-governmental organisation Harapan Komuniti on Wednesday as an appreciation for its volunteers, leaders, supporters and members of the community who have benefited from its work.

The NGO assists the poor and the needy, including women, children, and victims of HIV/AIDS and natural disasters, regardless of race or religion.

DUMC is among the bigger churches in the Klang Valley, with its membership numbering in the thousands.

"At 10pm on the same night, a large group of between 20 and 30 Jais and police officers entered the

premises of Dream Centre.

"They entered the hall where the dinner was taking place and started taking videos and photographs," Dr Ho said in a statement yesterday.

The officers, who took down details of the Muslim guests, had entered the private property without a warrant.

"When asked by the organisers why they were there, Jais replied that they received a complaint, but they were unable to produce a copy when asked," Dr Ho said.

Council of Churches Malaysia general secretary Reverend Dr Hermen Shastri said the act had made a mockery of the sanctity of religious places.

"We call for an immediate investigation into the raid and for an explanation as to the powers under

which the enforcement authorities based their action," said Dr Hermen.

Separately, Selangor chief police officer Deputy Comm Datuk Tun Hisan Tun Hamzah said the police

presence during the raid was merely to ensure the safety of all parties.

"We accompany other government agencies like the local councils when they conduct raids, such as against illegal massage parlours or to catch sand thieves. This to ensure nothing untoward happens during the raids or visits.

"It is our responsibility to ensure no force is used by any party and to prevent fights during such raids," he said.

A senior lawyer Roger Tan said it was standard operating procedure for the police to accompany state religious departments in such raids, regardless of whether the state was under the rule of the Barisan Nasional or the Pakatan Rakyat.

He added the police also accompanied the Immigration Department when they carried out raids.

"But in the end, the responsibility is always with the state religious department or the Immigration Department," he said.