

Headline **The trespass that was not a social call**  
Date **07 Aug 2011**  
MediaTitle **Sunday Star**  
Section **Nation**  
Journalist **N/A**  
Frequency **Weekly**  
Circ / Read **320,964 / 1,072,000**

Language **English**  
Page No **2**  
Article Size **158 cm<sup>2</sup>**  
Color **Full Color**  
ADValue **5,913**  
PRValue **17,738**



# The trespass that was not a social call



WHEN officials of the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais) raided a church on Wednesday, they might not have thought much of it. But that was the nub of the problem.

No religious official anywhere should be so inflammatory, much less have the temerity to commit such an outrageous act. That goes double for a multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious Malaysia in the 21st century.

As it turns out, the Jais operation on Damansara Utama Methodist Church was a grotesque showcase of self-contradictions by the perpetrators.

They claimed they had evidence of unlawful proselytising to Muslims,

but we know the occasion was a fundraising event for HIV support

activities.

If such evidence existed, we can reasonably expect it to be tendered or cited by now. But nothing of the kind has happened, apart from vague references to hearsay.

Selangor executive councillor Datuk Dr Hasan Ali of PAS, in defending the operation, reportedly said the Jais enforcement team "came at the end of the event" - yet he could know what had transpired "in the early part of the event".

In an apparent attempt at mitigation, Hasan even denied there had been a raid.

But he also claimed that Jais had found incriminating materials, that some participants had tried to escape by the back door but were stopped, and that 12 Muslim diners had been ordered to appear at the Jais enforcement office for further investigation.

He said the 12 could be charged under the Syariah Criminal Enactment 1995.

Indicating that denying the operation was futile, another Jais official said it was justified and people would soon learn its motive.

All too often, those found doing dishonourable deeds deny them, then try to justify them.

After that, they try to shut everyone else up by saying an investigation should be completed before comments may be made.

This unwarranted and deplorable raid can be neither accepted nor tolerated by Malaysian society.

It is a serious public interest issue for which fair comment is not only expected but obligatory.

The Selangor Government has considerable explaining to do, besides expressing regret over the incident. Why is such zealotry upheld by a Pakatan Rakyat state councillor, why is Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim so clueless, and why are his political allies so disinclined in condemning the raid?