

Headline **Selangor govt regrets raid**
Date **05 Aug 2011**
MediaTitle **The Sun**
Section **National**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily**
Circ / Read **270,506 / 171,000**

Language **English**
Page No **6**
Article Size **163 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **1,797**
PRValue **5,392**



Selangor govt 'regrets' raid

> MB orders JAIS to prepare in-depth report on incident

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PETALING JAYA: The Selangor government regrets the raid conducted by the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (JAIS) on the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) during an appreciation dinner on Wednesday night, Selangor Mentri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim said yesterday.

In a statement to the press, he said: "The Selangor government views the incident seriously."

"I have ordered JAIS to prepare an in-depth report about the incident, including exact reasons for the raid," he added.

Abdul Khalid said he had called DUMC senior pastor Daniel Ho to express his regret and will meet him soon upon receiving the JAIS report.

He said the state government respects the freedom of religion and the right of all parties to celebrate their culture and beliefs.

"We are always open to discussions and dialogues on fostering harmony regardless of religion and appreciate the efforts to increase understanding between people professing various religious beliefs," he added.

The raid occurred during an appreciation dinner held by DUMC at the Dream Centre in

Petaling Jaya to commemorate the efforts of the NGO Harapan Komuniti to help women and children, victims of HIV/AIDS and natural disasters. The event was attended by all races.

DUMC senior pastor Dr Daniel Ho said about 30 JAIS and police officers entered the premises without a warrant and started taking photographs and videos as well as details of the Muslim guests present.

"When asked by the organisers why they were there, JAIS (officers) replied that they received a complaint, but were unable to produce it when asked," he added.

He said the church and Community Excel Services that rented Dream Centre are disappointed with the action of JAIS and police officers who "entered and searched a private property without a warrant and for subjecting all guests at the thanksgiving dinner to undue harassment."

In a statement, CFM chairman Bishop Datuk Ng Moon Hing questioned the legality of the raid and interrogation of the guests present and whether the officers were acting within their legal jurisdiction.

"It is ironic that such a celebratory gathering of volunteers, leaders and members of the community should be disrupted by the high-handed and repugnant actions of the state religious enforcement officers.