

AG yet to decide on Al Islam reporters

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by Charles RamendranKUALA LUMPUR (Aug 25, 2009) : More than a month after police concluded their investigations, the Attorney General's Chambers has yet to decide on whether to charge or not to proceed with a complaint against two reporters of an Islamic magazine who allegedly wrote an article offensive to Christians.

Police said they had submitted investigation papers on the article in Al Islam to the AG's Chambers about a month ago and were awaiting instructions

Today, Kuala Lumpur police chief DCP Datuk Mohd Sabtu Osman when contacted said the AG's Chambers had not yet received any order in regard to the matter.

Al Islam reporter Muhd Ridhwan Abdul Jalil who wrote the article which was published in the magazine's June issue was also questioned by city police.

Muhd Ridhwan and a colleague had apparently been investigating a claim alleging that Malay Muslims who had committed apostasy were attending mass or prayers at a Catholic church believed to be the St Anthony Church off Jalan Pudu.

The reporter had written that his findings showed that the so called "Malay Muslims" were actually Catholics from Sabah, Sarawak and the Philippines and not Malays.

He had also admitted taking part in Holy Communion, a sacred ritual where Christians are fed the "body and blood" of Jesus Christ in the form of a thin bread referred to as the host and red wine by a priest. The story also showed a picture of the the host half eaten.

On July 8, two parishners of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit Church in Penang, Joachim Francis Xavier and Sudhagaran Stanley lodged a police report at the Patani police station in Penang urging police to probe the magazine and the journalists.

Joachim and Sudhagaran had also demanded the journalists return the half eaten host to the church.

When contacted yesterday, Sudhagaran said he, Joachim and lawyer Annou Xavier who is overseeing the case had handed a memorandum on Thursday to the Dang Wangi police who are investigating the case.

He said it was the second memorandum sent to police; Annou had sent one last week.

He said the investigations officer of the case met them and they learnt that the AG Chambers had asked police to furnish them with additional information three times, which was done.

Sudhagaran said they had initially wanted to handover a memorandum to the Home Ministry but changed their mind after learning that many Christians nationwide had wanted to come along.

"We did not want to turn it into a rally as the number of people who wanted to come along was overwhelming and so we called it off and chose to go in a group of three," he said.

" I hope the authorities will act quickly on this matter as it is serious. Otherwise, they may appear as practising double standards as they were quick to act on similar matters pertaining to Islam," he said, adding that a memorandum to the Home Ministry will still be handed over but declined to reveal the date.