



**PERSATUAN GEREJA-GEREJA DI SARAWAK**  
(ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES IN SARAWAK)

**ACS REJECTS “RUU KAWALAN DAN SEKATAN PENGEMBANGAN  
AGAMA BUKAN ISLAM”**

The Association of Churches in Sarawak (ACS) has been greatly alarmed by the news reported on FMT 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 that “Four new Shariah laws that were being drafted by the Federal government, including a bill on control and restrictions on the development of non-Muslim religions.” It was reported that YB Ustaz Ahmad Marzuk Shaary, a deputy minister in the Prime Minister’s Department (Religious Affairs), had said that a Wakaf Bill, Mufti Bill and Shariah Court Bill were the other new laws that are being planned.

On 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021, when our Yang di-Pertuan Agong appointed the 9<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister, a clear mandate to focus on the current pandemic was given, so that the people of Malaysia should not be burdened with endless political turmoil at a time when the country is struggling with health issues and economic depression, brought about by the pandemic.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2021, our newly appointed Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, in his maiden speech, presented the concept of “Keluarga Malaysia” where all Malaysians can be united regardless of religion and race. He pointed out that Malaysians are all a part of a family despite their diversity in religion, race and ethnicity, with all of them complementing and needing each other as different parts of a single body. We are a “Malaysian Family.”

In Sarawak, in conjunction with Malaysia Day, Inter-faith Harmony Walks have been organised since 2017. In pre-pandemic years, thousands of Bahais, Buddhists, Christians, Hinduism, Muslims, Sikhs, Taoists and people of goodwill have walked together as friends on the streets of Kuching and other major towns to promote mutual respect, acceptance, harmony and unity as Malaysians. This is an integral part of the social fabric of Sarawak.

As Malaysians come together to celebrate our 58<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Day, ACS considers such or any future attempts to introduce Shariah bills affecting non-Muslim religions, as directly contravening the very spirit of the formation of Malaysia – where Sarawak, Sabah and Malaya are equal partners. Furthermore, the Federal Constitution clearly states in Article 11(1): Every person has the right to profess and practise his religion. Such bills to control and restrict the development of all the non-Muslim religions should never be allowed to be tabled in our multi-racial and multi-religious Malaysia.

ACS reiterates the stance of our YAB Chief Minister of Sarawak, our Sarawak political leaders and Members of Parliament, UNIFOR, that have consistently rejected any introduction of such laws that would undermine and destroy the harmony among races and communities in Sarawak and Malaysia.

As Malaysians, let us work together and assist one another to overcome this pandemic. The Heads of Churches of ACS wish all ***Selamat Hari Malaysia.***

*✠ Archbishop Dr. Simon Poh  
ACS Chairman - 9<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021*