

## **Learning other religion would decrease social discomfort**

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Pusat KOMAS is deeply worried with the character of Malaysian elections remorsefully becoming a sad market of decaying social values and toxic politics. Lack of understanding the virtuousness of different religion is the fundamental reason for the continuous exploitation of race and religion in the election domain, recently, at Tanjung Piai by-election which sees the ethnicised “Vote Muslim First” campaign among many others.

On contrary, the present-day politics and policies that is based on fear or suspicion against the “other” are neutralised by rational leaders like Norlela Ariffin as emanating through her remarks on the issue of Malay Bible. We echo her opinion that learning shall be treated as a process of acquiring fresh knowledges and not to be manipulated as a threat of conversion.

Her timely comment pressing for the need to increase interfaith dialogues by exchanging religious literatures to understand one another in a multiracial society like Malaysia is applaudable.

Pusat KOMAS also condemn any parties that try to generate unnecessary confusion with the publication of Malay Bible. A quick skimming would enlighten with the fact that the Bible has been translated nearly into 698 languages around the world, including Indonesian language, a country which has the largest Muslim population. Likewise, Quran and other religious scriptures.

Availability of translated copies is a way for better appreciation and comprehension of religions which would help to nurture an understanding society. New Malaysia should adopt the culture of hosting healthy discourses of different faiths, culture and any other existing distinctions rather than banning or prohibiting discussions to take place in a public sphere.

Pusat KOMAS reaffirms Norlela’s call to break away from the fear and suspicion barriers, where views expressed by the PKR MP must be emulated equally by other political leaders of our nation in building a society driven by compassion to accept the plurality of Malaysia.

Released by,  
Pusat KOMAS.