

Malaysia: Four new syariah criminal offences to be added under the law

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KUALA TERENGGANU - Four new Sections and 21 amendments to the existing punishments under the Terengganu Syariah Criminal Offences (Takzir) Enactment 2001 will be proposed for the improvement of the law.

Terengganu Syariah Court chief judge Datuk Wan Mohd Zakri Wan Mohd said the four new Sections involved offences for witchcraft and black magic, pregnancy or giving birth out of wedlock, women imitating men's appearance and sodomy attempt.

He said the draft for the improvement of the enactment will be brought up for discussion and to be passed in the State Legislative Assembly sitting in November.

"The suggestion for amendments to be made was a result of study and research by the Syariah Law Coordination Committee under the State Syariah Implementation Education and Higher Education Committee chairman.

"As a result of discussions, 21 Sections were proposed to be amended while four new Sections and two subsections would be included (under the enactment)," he said at a press conference after attending the Terengganu Syariah Enactment 2001: Proposal on Improvement and Empowerment of Enactment Forum, here, on Monday.

He explained that a few enactments was studied and improved, among them were to maximise the sentence based on provision 356 for three years jail, RM5,000 fine and six strokes of the cane.

"Regarding reciprocal, based on the existing provision, only men imitating women's appearance was considered an offence." There are additions for several sentences with an alternative sentence for the existing provisions.

"A few sentences have been amended such as instead of being sentenced straight to prison, the judge has the power to hand down an alternative sentence such as sending (offenders) to a care centre that is approved by the Terengganu Islamic Council and Malay Customs (Maidam)," he said.

Wan Mohd Zakri said the Syariah Law Coordination Committee viewed the suggestion to amend the enactment as appropriate following the pattern of criminal cases developed in the Syariah courts that have increased every year and could be said to be more complex.

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