

# Name change afoot for Rufaqa'

## Deviationist movement planning name change to fool authorities, says Abdul Rahman

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**T**HE Selangor Religious Department (JAIS) is keeping a close eye on those involved with Rufaqa' Corporation Sdn Bhd after receiving information that its members were planning a name change again to fool the authorities.

State Religious Affairs Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Rahman Palil said JAIS had been taking strict action against Rufaqa' members and even charged some in court, prompting them to hide their operations under a different name.

Rufaqa', which is believed to be involved in deviationist practices and ideologies, is said to be trying to revive the teachings of the banned al-Arqam movement and its founder Ashaari Muhammad,

who is better known to his followers as Abuaya.

He said the main players in Rufaqa', including Ashaari, moved out of the state when JAIS started action against them and were now believed to be operating from outside.

"We will not let up in our action against this deviationist group and we are monitoring them closely so we will know if they change the movement's name and we will ban it too," he said after heading the demolition of two structures belonging to separate deviationist groups recently.

The first demolition, carried out

Abdul Rahman said JAIS had recently received information that Banuar was currently continuing his deviationist teachings in Johor, where he had built a structure similar to the three-storey wooden house in Meru, and Negri Sembilan.

"We are also investigating rumours that his son is trying to revive the movement here while there is already a warrant out for Banuar's arrest if he comes back to Selangor," he said.

The second structure to be demolished was the Noah's Ark of modern times built by followers of the late Sulaiman Mohd Said, who once predicted that the people of Klang would perish in a terrible flood.

The boat-like structure that is now close to ruin, contained 52-rooms that were to house the 500 followers that the Ajaran Sulaiman or Ajaran Bahtera Noah movement had at one time and

»We will not let up in our action against the group«



**Tear it down:** Enforcement officers demolishing a structure at a former site of the Ajaran Banuar movement in Meru.

by about 30 enforcement officers from the Klang Municipal Council (MPK), involved the structure belonging to the deviationist group known as Ajaran Haji Banuar.

The movement, also known as the Bikini Group (because women seeking treatment were told to wear just a sarong or underclothing), was founded by Banuar Roslan.

Banuar is believed to have claimed to possess mystical powers that he obtained directly from God while performing the haj in Mecca.

He was known to offer cures to visitors while often asking young women to spend the night at his house for cleansing rituals.

He also preached that followers did not have to attend Friday prayers.

movement had at one time and carry them to safety when the great flood occurred.

The mammoth structure – which stretches like a row of terrace houses and includes a surau with two towering masts, portholes and Quranic verses on the wall – is located in a remote village in Meru Barat.

Abdul Rahman said the movement started in 1989, by registering it as a business entity with a capital of RM2.5mil and envisioned a global Islamic enterprise.

He said Sulaiman did not know how to read the Quran nor did he have any formal religious education but claimed to be the Prophet Isa (Jesus).

He said the movement was banned in the 1990s and JAIS' investigations showed that there had not been any efforts by former members to revive it.

He said many of the followers lost their land and the promise of lucrative returns as they raised the funds to build the ark and capital for the business.