

Salahuddin: Will truth and justice prevail?
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The slew of graft allegations against Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman was cited as yet another example of creeping corruption in the country, as PAS politician Salahuddin Ayub took the floor in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Debating the motion of thanks on the Royal address, Salahuddin (PAS-Kubang Kerian) said: "Today we can see the existence of corruption almost everywhere in the country; from small fish to top officers, everyone is involved."

The PAS Youth chief made reference to the 24-page police report against Musa - including allegations of abuse of power, corruption and money-laundering - lodged on March 19 by Parti Keadilan Rakyat Sabah deputy liaison chief Dr Jeffrey Kitingan.

"Sabah, as one of the poorest states in the country, needs immense development of infrastructure (but alleged) corruption among the state's top men will never (allow) improvement of the state," Salahuddin noted.

However, Ronald Kiandee (BN-Beluran) objected, saying that it is unfair of Salahuddin to bring up allegations in Parliament that are based on a police report.

"The police report was made by a member of opposition party. He could have done it because he really wants justice, or just because he's looking for some political mileage," said Ronald.

Salahuddin replied that he did not cook up stories, but that he was bringing up what was stated in the police report.

"I am putting forward this issue in Parliament so that justice will prevail, so that this case will be heard in court as soon as possible. Integrity must be given importance," he said.

Police and judiciary

Salahuddin urged the government to restore the integrity of the police force in order to regain the "lost faith" of the public.

"Prime Minister Adullah Ahmad Badawi, in his first speech in Parliament (in 2004), said he would restore the glory of the country's legislature and police force," he pointed out.

Salahuddin said that one way to revive public confidence is to turn the police force into an independent body, thereby ending political interference.

Quoting Abdullah (photo) who had said "tell me the truth", Salahuddin said he hopes that when the general public is ready to tell the truth to the authorities, this will not backfire.

"When we have whistleblowers coming forward, they should not be burdened by ISA and OSA," he said, referring to the Internal Security Act and Official Secrets Act.

He further said "the judiciary is on trial", citing the example of former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim.

"So many unreasonable accusations were thrown against him. He was finally released because there was no evidence (of sodomy)," he said.

Cleaner polls procedures

Turning to general elections, he called for cleaner polls, an unbiased Election Commission (EC) and for an overhaul of election laws and procedures as the EC has proposed.

Mohamad Aziz (BN- Sri Gading) told Salahuddin that it is wrong to say that the EC is on the side of Barisan Nasional.

"This is a democratic country, and our democracy is better than the best democracies," he claimed.

Brushing the statement aside, Salahuddin urged the EC to clean up the electoral rolls, drop postal voting and to introduce the use of indelible ink to end abuses such as multiple voting.

Salahuddin also highlighted the need for a clearer definition of the Syariah court's jurisdiction in view of the impact of recent cases of conversion to Islam.

"The Syariah court is for Muslims only. Non-Muslims are not allowed to be present during hearings. However, this has changed especially after the case of (former army commando M) Moorthy (photo) and (A) Rayappan," he said.

He called for a special commission to define the juridical difference between civil and Syariah court.

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