

DAP cries foul over 'double standard' in azan issue
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DAP has raised the red flag over the "double standard" in the handling of a complaint that the azan (Muslim call to prayer) was too loud at dawn.

"I think that the apology (from the complainant) should be accepted by all and it should not be exploited," said national publicity secretary Tony Pua, who is also Petaling Jaya Utara parliamentarian.

"However, the only issue that Pakatan Rakyat has (with this) is the double standard in the handling of the issue."

When asked to comment on the matter at a press conference, he also pointed out the different "treatment" that Pakatan would get if it was their representatives on the other side of the equation.

"When it is a BN-related politician who is in the wrong, they will quickly close it up and say that the matter is resolved.

"But if it is a Pakatan person, we will get attacked for days and it will make the front page of (Umno-owned daily) Utusan Malaysia, calling us 'insensitive' or 'racists'."

The controversy erupted when the complainant, a MCA Youth leader, sent a letter to the Prime Minister's Office, which in turn passed it to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of Islamic affairs, Jamil Khir Baharom, and the Federal Territory Islamic Department (Jawi).

This later culminated in a noisy protest last Friday, in which demonstrators burnt an effigy of Ng Kian Nam, with some calling him to "change his citizenship".

However, Ng made a public apology at an Umno division office yesterday and the Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Minister Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal has since announced that the matter is "resolved".

'Allow dialogue'

Pua also pointed out that similar attacks had been made against his DAP colleague and Seputeh MP Teresa Kok in 2008 when Utusan claimed that she was responsible for a petition to lower the volume of the azan at a Puchong mosque.

Even with that, the allegations against her were fictitious and didn't exist.

"Although there no such instructions from her, she was attacked non-stop," he said, recalling the fury which eventually resulted in Kok's seven-day detention under the Internal Security Act.

Pua also called for more interfaith dialogues and closer cooperation between communities for better understanding.

"The more you prevent dialogues, the more such things will happen," he said.

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