

## **Selangor PAS: Don't deride the LGBT, help them**

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The Selangor chapter of the Islamic party PAS today took a nuanced stand on the now banned event Seksualiti Merdeka, saying that this group should not be derided.

Instead, Selangor PAS commissioner Abdul Rani Osman said the "confused" lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) people should be assisted.

NONE He said this was despite the fact that Islam considered anything but heterosexuality as against the "natural state of mankind".

"PAS realises that there are groups that have trouble identifying their sexuality. These groups are confused, in a dilemma and should be helped and not derided," he told a press conference today.

Rani (left) said the "problem" was "natural and not a question of wrong choices" and thus required further research and consideration.

"As such, we urge the National Fatwa Council to produce a guideline on the matter," he said.

He also called upon other Muslim organisations to "clarify their stand and to assist in handling the issue together".

"PAS Selangor takes an open stand and is willing to have a discussion and dialogue to find a solution on this matter," he said.

Nevertheless, Rani, who is also Meru assemblyperson, called on all Muslims not to take part in Seksualiti Merdeka as "it has nothing to do with human rights".

NONE "From an Islamic point of view, a programme championing the rights of the LGBT cannot count as championing human rights, as it champions a deviant lifestyle that goes against the natural state of mankind," he said.

He added that human rights in Islam includes "the right to free speech, to oppose cruelty and to live freely with dignity, without threat of persecution or detention without trial".

"PAS does not accept or agree with LGBTs," he said.

Giving an example of the complexity of the issue, Perlis mufti Juanda Jaya shared his experience in dealing with a group of transsexuals who wanted to perform the haj.

"Some 15 years ago, when I was organising a haj congregation, the counselling department asked me about a group of mak nyah and pondan who wanted to perform the haj.

'Even animals know their partners'

"I was happy to hear this as it showed their intentions to be close to Allah. Give them the chance to return to Allah as Allah's blessings have no limits," he said.

dr juanda jaya perlis mufti candidate 081106However, this sense of relief was short-lived when Juanda (left ) found that some of the transsexuals had "changed their physical appearances to look different from the gender stated on their identity cards".

"The question was, should they wear the hijab? Do they pray with the women? When they go to arafah, should they wear the hijab or the ihram like other men?

"If they wear the ihram, wouldn't their breasts show? Wouldn't this cause unease among the men? In Mina, which camp will they sleep in? Would the women accept them praying and sleeping together with them?" Juanda said of the questions he faced.

He also considered setting up a special camp for the group, but "then, we would be accused of discrimination" for treating them like aliens.

"But, isn't it a fact that they don't want to live like other people?" he asked of the conundrum that he said was yet to be solved.

He added that alternate sexuality puts mankind beneath animals "who know their partners".

"A cockerel will court a hen... it's impossible for cockerels to fight over another cockerel. Wow! Has mankind fallen beneath animals?

"Attempts to lower mankind to become beneath animals, these strange people who seem to be against the natural state of mankind should be opposed," he said.

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