

Shorten 30-day notice in Bill, says MCA
Malaysiakini.com
November 25 ,2011

Following up on objections to the Peaceful Assembly Bill 2011 from the opposition and civil society groups, the MCA Youth today called on the government to reduce the 30-day notice to be given to hold an assembly, as the Bill requires.

However, it gave its thumbs up to the provision that will replace the current requirement for a police permit with early notification.

MCA Youth chief Wee Ka Siong urged the government to clarify the requirement as to whether notification should be submitted to the police 30 days before the assembly or within 30 days.

Although the Bill gives more space compared with the current Section 27 of the Police Act, Wee said at a press conference after the Youth wing's central committee meeting today, the government should explain the details of the Bill.

The reasonable period to notify the police before holding assembly should be within five to seven days as a 30-day notification is too long for any assembly that is based on current issues.

But they agree street protests must be banned

"Compared with the current law, organisers must apply for a permit from the police, but now they only need to notify the police. However, we must give enough time for the police to make arrangements," added Wee, who is also deputy education minister.

Nevertheless, the MCA Youth movement shares the same stand with the government that street protests should be banned.

"Peaceful assembly is the right of the people, but it must follow certain conditions. For example, the United Kingdom home minister has also banned street protests after the recent London riots," he said.

Wee also urged the government to immediately investigate the National Feedlot Corporation (NFC) controversy to prevent it from being exploited by the opposition and become a "time bomb" for the BN in the next general election.

He denied that his statement was aimed at Minister of Women, Family and Community Development Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

"I'm not the prosecutor or judge. Investigations should be made according to the law, if there is any irregularity, and bring the culprit to book," he said.

On the other hand, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang chided Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for tabling a "revolutionary" Bill that is more backward than Burma's version of its public assembly law that requires only five days' notice.

"Najib must be at a loss for words to describe the new Burma Protest Bill requiring its citizens to give five days' notice to the authorities to protest peacefully when he can claim that his own Peaceful Assembly Bill is 'revolutionary' but which requires 30 days' notice," Lim said in a statement released today.

The Ipoh Timor MP noted that Burma has always been regarded as the worst laggard of a country in Asean for its utter disregard and contempt for human rights - but the Malaysian government and people have now to learn from Burma to respect freedom of assembly.

"Does Najib want to send Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to Burma to learn to be more respectful

of fundamental liberties, at least with regard to freedom of assembly for the respective citizenry?"

Lim also warned that should the Bill be enacted as law, Malaysian MPs would not be able to hold their heads high, whether at regional or international conferences.

"I thought the day will never come for me to say this - the Malaysian prime minister and the cabinet should learn from Burma, at least on freedom of peaceful protest and assembly."

The veteran lawmaker reiterated that the Bill, which is slated to be debated in the Parliament on Tuesday, should be withdrawn and totally revamped.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/182428>