

Jail term for shoe-throwing imam 'excessive'

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PKR vice-president N Surendran has lashed out at the Federal Court's decision to sentence the shoe-throwing imam to one year's jail for contempt of court, saying that the ruling is excessive and inappropriate.

On defending Hoslan Hussain (right), Surendran said in a statement that the Federal Court did not consider the circumstances arisen from the case and had failed to temper justice with mercy.

"Imam Hoslan was unrepresented and very emotional when he committed the unfortunate act. He is also a struggling father with seven children, whose case had been delayed since 1999.

"A stern reprimand or fine would have been adequate in this case," he added.

Hoslan flung his shoes at the three-man bench led by Chief Judge of Malaya Zulkefli Ahmad Makinudi last month after the court rejected his application to hear his appeal over an eviction case.

The same three judges who heard the case yesterday ruled that Hoslan must be punished so to protect the dignity of the court.

Lack of public confidence

According to Surendran (below), who is a practising lawyer, the court should guard its dignity by the strength of its moral authority, not by imprisoning people.

He urged the judiciary to take a hard look at themselves as public confidence has shrunk due to the perception that judges are not independent and have failed to safeguard the basic rights of Malaysians.

"This lack of confidence and respect can lead to a recurrence of incidents like the shoe-throwing case," he said.

Meanwhile, PAS Youth said they would assist Hoslan's family when the latter serves his jail term.

PAS publicity chief Riduan Mohd Nor said Hoslan's shoe-throwing action was a manifestation of anger against the judiciary for its failure to defend the rights of common citizens.

"This serves as a reminder to all quarters to not despise the grassroots," he said.

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