Ministry probing teachers' political beliefs survey
MalaysiaKini.com
March 15, 2012
By S Pathmawathy

The Education Ministry is investigating the motive behind the Tawau district education office's survey to document the political preferences of its staff.

NONEDeputy minister Wee Ka Siong said that he has forwarded a complaint from Tawau SAPP parliamentarian Chua Soon Boi yesterday to the ministry's director-general to be investigated.

"So far there is no such directive from the Ministry of Education. It is to my rude shock that the Tawau education office issued such questionnaires," Wee told a press conference at the Parliament lobby today.

Chua had said that the move would have an adverse impact on teachers as it would inculcate fear of being persecuted for their political preferences.

Malaysiakini reported last week that Tawau education officer Darman Shah Asakil had on March 1 issued a directive to school heads in the district to record the political leanings of all staff under them.

There were to be marked according to three colour categories - ‘black' for those who support the opposition; ‘white' for those who are grateful and supportive of government and ‘grey' for the fence sitters.

'To encourage teachers to focus on teaching'

Those who "actively campaign against the government and try to influence their colleagues to take part in activities that encourage hatred for government" will be recorded under the ‘black' category.

The letter states that the directive was given by the Sabah Education Department at a special meeting on Feb 29.

However, Darman Shah, withdrew the directive after the report went viral on the Internet and told Malaysiakini that it was a "mistake".

He also said it was not a directive from the ministry or Sabah Education Department but an initiative by the Tawau office to encourage teachers to focus on their teaching.

"I wonder why there is only one education office that issued such a directive. If it is from the Ministry of Education it must be applicable to all districts," Wee said when denying that the ministry was behind the move.

Asked whether action will be taken against the staff involved in the Tawau Education Office involved in he survey, Wee said: "We are waiting for a full report from the state. We will do the needful."

He also brushed off claims that a similar survey with politically-skewed questions to gauge teachers' political leanings was being carried out in Selangor, since the forms did not bear the ministry's official logo.

"We are not interested in such questions. I mean you can ask but as a politician... we know how to judge. I don't think our minister needs that (kind of) input from teachers," Wee added.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/192151