

BN reps walk out over CM's temple razing remark

MalaysiaKini.com

May 07, 2012

By Susan Loone

Ten Penang Umno assemblypersons staged a walk-out at the state legislative assembly today to protest Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's remark that if the party regains power, Hindu temples would be demolished.

Lim was referring to a recent demolition of a 50-year-old temple in Prai by the Penang Port Sdn Bhd, and its chairperson Hilmi Yahya's (BN-Teluk Bahang) refusal to apologise over the matter.

The Umno reps had demanded that Lim withdraw the statement, saying he was encouraging a view which could create problems between the different races.

But Lim had actually said that temples "would be threatened" if Umno came to power.

Lim said what he meant was that the temples would "probably" be demolished, but stopped short of withdrawing his comment.

During a press conference outside the House, Hilmi (*right*) said that the Umno reps were "dissatisfied, disappointed and angry" at Lim's attitude.

"I had said that I would resolve the matter. So, wait for that. The issue of apology does not arise," he said.

"I was telling the Dewan that the person who demolished the temple is a PAS member. I mentioned his membership number but we shall not say the name," he added.

State opposition leader Azhar Ibrahim said Lim's comment was against Standing Order 46 (17c) which prohibits any malicious remarks which can create misunderstanding between the races.

He accused Lim of "irresponsibility" not befitting his position as the chief minister of Penang.

"He is not able to maintain harmony between the races and can create conflicts. We can do politicking but don't create problems between the races."

Azhar (*left*), who is Penang assemblyperson, challenged Lim to repeat his remarks outside the House, asking him not to hide behind the state assembly privileges.

The veteran Umno leader said that he and his colleagues had to leave the House "to avoid tension" from rising.

He described the situation as the "biggest loss for the rakyat" for voting in a Pakatan Rakyat government, lambasting Lim for his arrogance (*sombong, bongkak dan angkuh*).

Meanwhile, Shabudin Yahaya (BN-Permatang Berangan) quipped that Lim made the remark

probably because he was “envious” about the BN’s way of treating all communities equally.

He even accused Lim of purposely raising the issue of Hindu temple demolition to “create tension and to mislead” the people.

“He is not qualified to be CM. He should resign,” Shabudin said, backed by the other assemblypersons who attend the press conference in the state opposition leader’s office.

To demonstrate remorse, Lim insisted that both Hilmi and Penang Port Commission chairperson and MCA president Chua Soi Lek apologise unreservedly for this “religious sacrilege and trampling on religious sensitivities”.

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