

'I didn't call for Ambiga to be hanged but...'

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By S Pathmawathy

Sri Gading BN parliamentarian Mohamad Aziz denied inciting “racism or extremism” against Bersih co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan, saying he was only posing a question to Parliament on the possibility of her being punished.

“My statement in the Dewan Rakyat on Tuesday clearly stated, ‘Apakah Ambiga tidak boleh kita anggap penderhaka kepada Duli Yang Maha Mulia Yang di-Pertuan Agong dan hukum gantung kepada dia?’ (Can we not consider Ambiga a traitor to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and sentence her to be hanged?),” he said, citing the Hansard.

“The statement is clear that it is a question with the assumption whether Ambiga had committed treason toward the Agong,” said Mohamad (left) during a press conference at the Parliament lobby today.

He hit out at critics, particularly Penang Chief Minister and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, for “twisting” the former’s speech during the Supplementary Supply Bill 2012 debate.

Mohamad pointed out that the only “ill-intended” remarks in the matter were in fact Lim’s claim that it was being made an issue of “racism, religion and gender”.

“I said it in the context of the nation’s safety, I didn’t make any reference to race, religion or gender in my speech, just the nation’s security. Full stop - whether the act by rioters on April 28, could be considered treason towards the Agong,” he reiterated.

“I asked a question, and it is up to the AG (attorney-general) to decipher it. If she didn’t commit treason then fine. It has nothing to do with race, religion or gender.

“Racists are from DAP, not me.” On Tuesday, Mohamad had likened Ambiga to the leaders of the Al-Ma’unah militant group which tried to overthrow the government in 2000.

The militants were eventually sentenced to death by hanging for “waging war against the King”, under Section 122 of the Penal Code.

According to the Hansard, he had said that “foreign agents” were involved and funding the electoral reform movement therefore it is an act of treason to the nation.

“I didn’t say Ambiga must be hung. So friends in PPP and MIC, don’t fall into DAP’s trap. DAP is actually losing out the support of the Indians who are supporting BN.

“DAP has forgotten the pain it had caused the Indian community at Kampung Buah Pala, (in Penang) so he (Lim) was trying to cover-up his actions by pushing the blame to me,” said

Mohamad, referring to accusations that the state government had sabotaged the federal government's attempt to provide residents with compensation.

In 2009, the village of Kampung Buah Pala had been demolished to make way for Oasis, a high-end condominium project by developer Nusmetro Venture.

‘A ploy’ to win back Indian support

But Mohamad saw Lim’s criticisms as an act of fanning racism and “a ploy” to win back the Indian community’s support.

Distancing BN from Mohamad’s comments, the coalition’s secretary-general Tengku Adnan Mansor, in a statement yesterday, said that the comments were Mohamad’s “personal opinion” and does not reflect BN’s stand on the matter.

“He is right to say that it was my personal statement and I support it, because it clearly says that we uphold the rights enshrined in the constitution. I hope this clears things up,” said Mohamad.

“I feel that Ambiga has become a tool for foreign agents who are a threat to national security which affects everyone - Malays, Indians and Chinese,” he said.

Insisting that the statement has been misconstrued, Mohamad said he will not apologise for the remarks.

“I don’t have to apologise because my statement was not wrong. There were elements of racism, touched on religion or an accusation. I only asked, “apakah” (could), so I don’t have to apologise I did not commit any crime,” he said.

Meanwhile, Lim, when asked on Mohamad’s defence, rebuked the latter’s explanation, saying that Mohamad did not have to spell it out as he was alluding to it.

“The Al-Maunah group was hanged for treason... the question leads to an answer, for example, when I ask why weren’t those involved in the cow and condo scandal charged, that means I want them to be charged,” exclaimed Lim.

He asserted that Ambiga is an “easy target” because she comes from a “minority community”, adding that otherwise why did not Mohamad mention the others on the steering committee.

“He (Mohamad) is trying to twist and turn things around. We will deal with him inside the House. Maybe he should take his own advise and learn BM (Bahasa Malaysia),” Lim told reporters.

