

Umno MP withdraws 'hang Ambiga' remark

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By Hazlan Zakaria

Umno MP for Sri Gading Mohamad Aziz today retracted his remark made on Tuesday where he asked if Bersih co-chairperson S Ambiga should be hung for treason.

"I am a disciplined person. I am from a party that is disciplined. If my remark has hurt the feelings of my fellow leaders from MIC or PPP then in the spirit of BN fellowship, I retract my statement made on Tuesday," he told the Dewan Rakyat today.

The Sri Gading MP was instructed to retract his remarks by Deputy Speaker Wan Junaidi Jaafar (left).

While he did not technically see anything wrong with the statement, Wan Junaidy believed it may have lacked decorum.

"As a statement it may be construed as an assault, but if phrased as a question, it is not an offence," argued the deputy speaker mentioning case law on a similar incident.

However he argued that as speaker, he held that all MPs should exercise moderation and instructed Mohamad to stand up and retract his strong words.

Gone overboard

This was after Bagan MP Lim Guan Eng had stood up calling for a ruling on Mohamad's statement which he said had "gone overboard" in asking for punishment without due process.

"It is a statement that should not have come out from an MP's (mouth)," lashed Lim, quoting Standing Order 36 subsections (4) for using offensive language, (7) for using the name of the Agong to in an apparent attempt to influence the House, and (10) for using improper words that may promote ill-will.

He pointed out even the MIC had criticised Mohamad's remark and BN too had distanced itself from the vocal MP.

Standing up after being asked by Wan Junaidy, the Seri Gading MP then launched into an emotional tirade against Lim and the DAP.

"DAP is a party that spins. A racist party!" he exclaimed.

He then raved on about how his statement had been spun out of context by Lim (right), referring to the Penang chief minister's earlier remark labelling his statement against Ambiga as racist, painting it as Mohamad's indictment of women, Indians and Hindus.

Mohamad continued his short tirade, before calming down after several reminders by the deputy speaker and proceeded to retract his statement.

The Sri Gading MP courted controversy on Tuesday, when he asked during the debate for the Supplementary Bill if Ambiga should be hung for treason.

"Could Ambiga also be seen as a traitor to the Agong and be hung as well?" He questioned, mentioning the Al-Maunah incident when several men were hung for amassing arms to wage war against the Agong.

Mohamad's statement caused an uproar from the Opposition and civil society.

The MIC issued a strongly worded statement against it and BN secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor distanced the ruling coalition from what he called the Seri Gading MP's "personal remarks" that did not represent the party's stance.

MIC welcomes apology

In an immediate response, MIC deputy president Dr S Subramaniam welcomed the apology and hoped that BN parliamentarians had learnt their lesson.

"They should be more sensitive next time," he said when met by journalists in Petaling Jaya today.

When asked if there were many of such BN parliamentarians, he said this was reflected on both sides of the political divide.

"Occasionally there will be someone (who comes out with these statements)," he said.

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