

Selangor gov't freezes gender separation ruling
MalaysiaKini.com
July 10, 2012
By Nigel Aw

The Selangor government has ordered a freeze on a ruling made by the Kuala Selangor District Council in which unmarried Muslim couples must sit separately in cinemas.

Local government, research and study exco member Ronnie Liu said the ruling was made without the knowledge of the state government.

"This decision was never referred to the state. We only found out when it was reported in the press. It is against the present local council rules in Selangor as a whole," he told a press conference at the lobby of the Selangor state assembly this afternoon.

Liu said the council chairperson has been instructed to defer the ruling.

"I have asked that the Yang Dipertua to put off the ruling and bring it back to the full board for discussion," he said.

Liu said this was to prevent any double standards as all other local governments in Selangor do not have such a ruling.

Chinese language daily China Press today reported that cinemas in Kuala Selangor attempting to renew their licences have been informed that they must enforce the gender segregation rule.

According to the report, cinema owners were asked by PAS district councillors to put up signs advising Muslim males and females to sit separately if they are not blood relatives.

However, non-Muslims are not affected by the ruling.

In February, English language daily Star reported that PAS Bangi state assemblyperson Dr Shafie Abu Bakar had pushed for a ban of cinemas in Bangi, which he claimed would "corrupt the minds" of youngsters.

On a separate matter, Liu, who is also Pandamaran state assemblyperson, said a Facebook page has been set up for the public to lodge complaints on local government matters directly to him.

"All the respective local councils will also be linked to the page and they can take immediate action based on the complaints... For a start, I encourage the public to focus on matters on rubbish collection," he said.

'PAS didn't endorse this'

When approached, Hulu Kelang state assemblyperson Saari Sungib said the ruling was not endorsed by Selangor PAS.

azlan"Our guideline is that if anything is to be done, it must be discussed together at the state level. This was never brought to the state level," said Saari who is also Selangor PAS information chief.

Saari added that the matter would be discussed by the state party leadership before an official statement is issued.

MCA's Sungai Pelek state assemblyperson Yap Ee Wah condemned the ruling as the work of fanatics.

"I feel this is going overboard - local councillors making such rulings on their own in the local council. I see these people as fanatics who disrespect other people's way of life," Yap said.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/203192>