

## **Kit Siang: Why no cabinet committee on crime?**

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The cabinet got a slamming from DAP national adviser Lim Kit Siang today for setting up a special committee on Selangor's water situation rather than one to eliminate crime.

The cabinet would be doing a better job by setting up a committee to investigate and address the increasingly palpable fear of crime in this country, Lim said in a statement.

"There is a very serious disconnect between the repeated assurances of a declining crime rate in the country by Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein and the police on one hand, and the lack of public confidence and credibility, even among foreign investors, on the other hand," Lim said.

He was referring to a recent spate of crimes suffered by high profile figures, including the burglary at former Malacca chief minister Rahim Thamby Chik's house in Bukit Bandaraya, Bangsar, as well as a robbery of the home of Faizah Shuib, widow of former cabinet minister Megat Junid Megat Ayub.

Three men, believed to be Indonesians, entered Faizah's house, tied her up and escaped with jewellery and watches worth a total of RM50,000.

Such high profile crime cases, Lim argued, indicated that fear of crime was steadily rising, despite Hishammuddin arguing that the recent spate of high profile crime cases was simply a matter of perception and not an indication of an increase crime rate.

"It is therefore most regrettable that the cabinet has failed to set up a committee on the crime situation and to investigate the government's failure to deliver to Malaysians their right to be free of crime and from the fear of crime," he said.

Has Hishammuddin failed?

Lim further raised doubts about Hishammuddin's credibility as home minister, citing a poll in a pro-establishment blog that asked participants whether Hishammuddin was fit to remain as home minister.

"Out of 622 who voted in the three-day poll, a staggering 96 percent gave Hishammuddin 'the thumbs down', with the largest number of votes (400 votes or 64 percent) saying Hishammuddin 'is not fit to be minister of anything'.

"A total of 102 of the voters or 16 percent said Hishammuddin is not fit to be home minister, and a sizable number 94 or 15 percent said they are 'beyond fed up with Hisham'," he said.

Noting that the poll was conducted by a pro-establishment blog, Lim said this indicated that the home minister was not faring well even among the Umno and BN circles.

This, he said, was a blow against the ruling government's 'Janji Ditepati' campaign and questioned whether Hishammuddin had performed his duty to eliminate crime and public fear of crime throughout his years as home minister.

Would Hishammuddin dare do a survey?

Lim said public perception of crime had steadily dropped since Hishammuddin's appointment as home minister and in this he quoted two separate public opinion surveys conducted by the Home Ministry itself.

The first survey was conducted by the Dzaidin Royal Police Commission in 2004, prior to Hishammuddin's appointment.

In this, 89 percent of the 575 respondents were 'worried' to 'extremely worried' about crime in their neighbourhoods, and only one in 10 respondents felt safe from crime in their neighbourhoods.

The second survey was conducted on the Home Ministry's website in 2009, after Hishammuddin's appointment.

This survey showed that 97 percent of Malaysians felt unsafe about crime - an eight percent increase compared with the earlier survey. The number of respondents who felt safe from crime similarly decreased, to one in 100.

From the Home Ministry's 2009 survey, Lim said, 97 percent of the respondents felt unsafe because of the high crime rate, 95 percent of them felt the safety of the people was not guaranteed and 94 percent felt the government had not done its best to ensure that the safety of the people was at the best level.

"Does Hishammuddin dare to ask the Home Ministry to conduct an update of this online opinion poll on the Home Ministry website to ascertain whether, in the past three years, there has been any improvement in the percentages?"

"Three years have passed with Hishammuddin as the home minister. Could the results be possibly even worse if an opinion poll by the ministry's website is repeated now?" Lim asked.

Lim called for an end to the denials on public scepticism about low crime rates and deference in the denial of crime statistics. He called for an end to public fear of crime, which, he added, was at the worst stage in the nation's history.

"It is therefore most regrettable that the cabinet has failed to set up a cabinet committee on the crime situation, or even to put on its agenda the government's failure to deliver to Malaysians their two most fundamental human rights: the right to be free from crime and to be free from the fear of crime," he added.

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