

'Grounded' Anifah should quit, says Pakatan

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By Hafiz Yatim

Pakatan Rakyat has called on Foreign Minister Anifah Aman to resign over alleged dereliction of duties and failing to handle foreign affairs properly.

DAP international secretary Liew Chin Tong said today the Pakatan secretariat that met last night unanimously agreed that Anifah was not up to the job.

Liew said talk within diplomatic circles was that Anifah preferred ambassadors to meet him in his home state of Sabah instead of in the federal capital Kuala Lumpur.

"He is hiding in Kota Kinabalu and even required the Chinese ambassador to meet him there," he told a press conference today.

Liew said that Malaysia, unlike before, had failed to assert its position in important international matters such as the Syrian conflict or to address the problems faced by the Rohingyas and the Palestinian community.

"Compare this to when Anwar Ibrahim was in the cabinet, when we actively participated in the resolution of the Bosnian conflict in the Balkans," Liew said.

He also referred to an article in The Star written by former diplomat Dennis Ignatius, complaining about the state of Malaysia's foreign affairs, where said, "Wisma Putra no longer has the capacity to provide sound strategic advice to the government."

Liew added: "Many ambassadors have also called for a more hands-on foreign minister," he said.

PKR vice-president Tian Chua said Anifah has proven himself to be an ineffective foreign minister for playing a poor role in the dispute over the Spratly Islands and other disputes with the Philippines.

"Maybe it is necessary for the prime minister Najib Abdul Razak to take over the foreign affairs ministry and replacing Anifah as (the premier himself has to attend) the Organisation of Islamic Conference to resolve the Syrian conflict," Tian Chua said.

He also pointed out instances where diplomatic officials who met Anifah were scolded - but the PKR vice-president did not want to divulge their identities, saying this involved matters of diplomacy.

"How often can you find Anifah in KL to fulfil his responsibilities? He is always in Sabah, trying to look after his constituency ever since former Umno supreme council member Lajim Ukin left the party," Tian Chua said.

Anifah's deputy Richard Riot, he added, was better known in the diplomatic circles.

'It's not just bringing students home'

Mocking the "rescue" of Malaysian students in unstable countries such as Egypt and Syria, PAS Kuala Krai MP Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli said the Foreign Affairs Ministry was only in charge of bringing home Malaysian students who were overseas.

"There is the issue of the United States wanting to put troops in Australia. The capability of our Foreign Ministry is in disrepute. If Anifah cannot do the job, it is better he resigns," Hatta said.

"The Foreign Ministry is supposed to be the eyes of the country to the world and Anifah is simply not playing this role.

Describing Anifah as the most unprofessional foreign minister in Malaysian history, Hatta said Anifah could be said to be the worst in the Asean region as he had also been complacent in handling regional affairs cooperation.

Normally, he said Malaysia's assertion in foreign affairs could be seen within Asean region but this was not so now, especially with the plight of the Rohingyas.

Agreeing with this, Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar said in the Rohingya affair, where Malaysia has yet to make a stand, "we find the Turkish prime minister's wife going into Burma to show her concern".

Take immediate steps to stop genocide

Malaysia's silence, Nurul Izzah added, was unbecoming of the country which had during Dr Mahathir Mohamad's time had approved Burma's entry into Asean despite it being ruled by the military junta.

She said the Pakatan secretariat wants Najib to take immediate action to stop the genocide in Burma and to allow the international community to provide direct assistance to the Rohingyas.

Pakatan also wants Asean to demand that Burma halts the genocide there; ask China to intervene and actively advise the country to protect all minorities; and demand that Bangladesh pressures Burma to open its border to provide relief aid to Rohingyas.

Malaysia should also demand that the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation issue a joint statement calling for an emergency sitting of the United Nations Security Council to intervene in the attacks on the Rohingyas.

"Malaysia must act fast and decisively to help the plight of the Rohingyas and make the country once more an exemplary Islamic country that is active in foreign affairs," Nurul Izzah added.