

DAP's stand on Sabah defections 'self-explanatory'

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By Nigel Aw

DAP today shot back at MCA for alleging that the party had failed to speak up against political defections, stating that its advocacy for an 'anti-hopping' law was self-explanatory of its stance.

"We have not commented on their (Sabah defectors) position but what we have said is there should be an anti-hopping law... I think that itself is self-explanatory," DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said in reference to the recent defection of two members of parliament (MPs) to Pakatan Rakyat.

When asked for DAP's stance on the now Pakatan-friendly Tuaran MP Wilfred Bumburing and Beaufort MP Lajim Ukin, Lim (centre in photo) replied, "We are clear on what we said - there should be an anti-hopping law.

"As far as the two Sabah MPs are concerned, it shows that they have lost confidence in Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman."

Pressed on whether the duo should resign as MPs for leaving BN for a fresh mandate as advocated by the party, Lim said the existing law does not allow them to do so.

"How to seek a fresh mandate now? Because under the law it is not possible," he said.

Under current law, a by-election is not required three years into an election cycle.

MCA president Chua Soi Lek had criticised the DAP for its proposal to introduce an anti-hopping law through the Penang state legislative assembly.

Chua had claimed the move was a publicity stunt as the proposed law would be against the federal constitution's guarantee of freedom of association and if DAP was sincere it should curb party-hopping through its party constitution.

'MCA's proposal against freedom'

Responding to this, Lim, who is DAP secretary-general, said it was Chua's proposal that was against freedom of association.

Lim explained that the legislation mooted by DAP would only require elected representatives to quit as a state assemblyperson should they jump ship but does not restrict their movement between parties.

"You cannot prevent anyone from leaving or joining a party. We believe in the freedom of association. People can move from MCA to DAP or DAP to MCA... but if they are an elected representative they must first resign.

"By suggesting that (we prevent party hopping through the party constitution), Chua is denying the basic rights of freedom of association," he said.

However, Lim conceded that there was an existing Supreme Court (now Federal Court) ruling which said such a legislation was unconstitutional, but called for its review.

He added that the proposed law will be discussed in the upcoming Penang exco meeting.

Asked if the matter will be raised at the Pakatan Rakyat level, he replied: "Let us start with Penang first, then we will explore if we can expand it."

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