

DAP dares Najib to release Suhakam report

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By Aidila Razak

DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang today demanded that caretaker Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak release the report by the National Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) on land rights of the native communities in Malaysia.

According to Lim, who is in Kota Kinabalu today, a caretaker government has "no right" to withhold the publication of such reports.

"I call on Najib to give his personal attention and within 24 hours, state that he has no objection to the immediate release of the report," Lim told reporters.

Whistleblower website Sarawak Report this week leaked the document which details findings of Suhakam's investigation into the land rights of native communities in Sabah and Sarawak and the Orang Asli of the peninsula.

The report was ready before the dissolution of Parliament, but it had not seen the light of day before that, allegedly due to political interference.

It found evidence of abuse and fraud that are to the detriment of the native people. Land rights is a common problem in the interior constituencies of Sabah and Sarawak.

In one case in Beluran, Sabah, Suhakam said that villagers complained that their village chief had allowed his signature to be used by outsiders to claim land in the village in the 1980s.

The land was later sold to a large plantation company, but Suhakam noted that the authorities were "not open" to probe the alleged fraud.

It added that the villagers had to travel one week by sampan and a few hours more by car to keep up with the progress of their complaint with the authorities.

The commission stressed that the case is still unresolved, although the plantation company had since compensated the village with two buffaloes for the destruction of their ancestral grave site.

Lim, who campaigned in Sandakan last night and will be departing for Sarawak

today, said that this is not the first time that Suhakam has been ignored.

In 2005, he pointed out, Suhakam under the leadership of Sabahan Simon Sipaun had made 10 recommendations on the same issue and yet they were not taken up.

Lahad Datu not a boon for BN

Meanwhile, Lim refuted Najib's claim yesterday that the Lahad Datu incursion had swayed sentiments towards the BN.

The DAP Gelang Patah candidate said that this is because the incident should not have happened in the first place, and that it actually proved the BN's failure.

"How is it that Parliament approves tens of billions of ringgit for defence and (yet) we can't deal with a ragtag group from Southern Philippines?"

"We have two submarines in Sepanggar (on the west coast of Sabah) but what are they doing? Something is amiss. We don't want to politicise the issue but this is the reality we must face," he said.

He added that 35 years ago, when he first returned to Sabah following his unceremonious eviction by the Sabah government in 1969, security had been top of the list of concerns for the state then.

"Three predominant issues were Sabah security, illegal immigrants and corruption. Things have gone from bad to worse," he noted.

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