

'Federal-appointed village panels disturbing and illegal'

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By Susan Loone

Penang has no need for the 142 village development and security committee (JKKP) members appointed by the federal government as this creates confusion among the people, said Deputy Chief Minister I Rashid Hasnon.

Their presence is not only "disturbing but illegal" as they were not appointed by the state and their duties often overlapped with Penang's existing 285 JKJKs, he added.

(Note: JKJKs are state appointed village development and security committee members, JKJKs are federal ones.)

"If you ask me, these extra JKJKs are not necessary at all, just as the opposition said our coordinators in BN constituencies are not," he said at a press conference held at the state legislative assembly yesterday.

"The 285 JKJKs appointed by Penang are enough to provide services to the people compared to only 142 JKJKs named by the federal government," he added.

"If the opposition keeps asking the reasons why we have appointed 10 coordinators in the constituencies won by BN, we are also asking why is there a need for the 142 JKJKs in Penang," he queried.

Rashid had raised the issue while winding up the motion of thanks to the Governor's speech at the state legislative assembly yesterday.

He was responding to the opposition (BN) who said these coordinators (appointed in BN constituencies) were unnecessary as there are already assemblypersons who are willing to work with the state administration.

He added that among the 285 state appointed JKJKs, 65 are in Seberang Perai Tengah, Seberang Perai Utara (55), Seberang Perai Selatan (40), Timur Laut (77) and Barat Daya (48).

"JKJKs are the legitimate channel for all in Penang, regardless of political affiliation, they have to serve the kampungs and the residential areas as well," he stressed.

"The JKJK position should be illegal, it is disturbing, they create confusion among

the various communities," he added.

Rashid cited an example where developers sought help from JKPPs to look for residents living on the land they had planned to develop, but did not get much support.

'Seek aid of JKPPs in future'

He advised such quarters to seek the aid of JKPPs instead in the future to get better support.

During the session, state executive councillor Abdul Malik Kassim condemned the opposition for raising the issue when they also appoint coordinators in state and parliamentary seats which they lost in the general elections.

Before the May 5 polls, the federal government appointed 29 state and 11 parliamentary coordinators who represent the BN in Penang.

This was confirmed by state opposition leader Jahara Hamid when she said that the posts were filled last year.

But the opposition has yet to fill the position after the polls, as all BN component parties are undergoing internal elections, and the matter would be decided by the new leaderships of the respective parties.

Rashid said that the opposition was "bankrupt of ideas" when Jahara said that the posts were necessary for the federal government to channel their allocations to the area.

"The claim is baseless. We have yet to see any result from the allocation and what kind of allocation are they talking about," he said.

"If the federal government truly wants to help the rakyat in Pakatan constituencies, any budget or allocation can be fully channeled to the state government," he proposed.

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