

MCA: We dislike video, but slap reward is uncouth
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Despite its almost daily criticism of DAP's Teresa Kok over her Chinese New Year video, MCA today joined the growing voice of those condemning the actions of several NGOs that threatened the Seputeh MP.

MCA's Religious Harmony Bureau chairperson Ti Lian Ker urged authorities to use the law to clampdown on the 'Council of Islamic NGOs', salling its actions when protesting the satirical video yesterday as "totally unacceptable and reprehensible".

While Ti (left) does not like Kok's video, he said expressing different opinions is an acceptable behaviour under a democracy but threats to harm any individual are not.

"In this context, where the safety and security of any opposition member has been compromised, our party condemns in harshest terms the actions by the Council of Islamic NGOs.

"Not only are such calls to 'slap Teresa' uncouth and out-of-time, they are a total abuse of the principles of democracy, and in this case, seditious, in gross contravention of an individual's right to be free from harm in any form," Ti said in a statement today.

He urged the NGOs involved in yesterday's protest to follow the law, stating that like everyone else, they must give a 10-day notice as required under the Peaceful Assembly Act and then carry out a peaceful gathering.

Yesterday's heated protest turned ugly when the group slaughtered chickens and smeared the blood on a banner with the pictures of several opposition politicians, including that of Kok, and pledged a reward to anyone who would slap her and record the act.

"Therefore, MCA calls upon the authorities to come down hard on all parties that breach the law, to uphold and enforce the law so that such ugly, unhealthy trends of calling for mob rule will be nipped in the bud and halted permanently," Ti added.

Also condemning the cash reward for slapping Kok and the chicken blood protest, Wanita MCA chief Heng Seai Kie (right) said people should not take laws into their

own hands and resort to violence as an act of retaliation.

However, she claimed that the DAP MP was wrong for producing the "defamatory" Chinese New Year video clip.

Taking the NGOs to task, she said: "Such an emotional protest will only make things worse and it will not help to resolve the issue at all."

"I hope that the police will complete its investigation as soon as possible so that justice can be delivered and leave the innocent chickens alone," she added.

Other responses:

Kuthubul Zaman Bukhari of human rights NGO Proham:

"This is clearly an act of inciting hate and violence. It has stepped beyond democratic freedoms.

"It is clearly an offence under Section 503 of the Penal Code, for criminal intimidation and under Section 504 of the Penal Code for intentional insult with intent to provoke a breach of the peace.

"Proham condemns such behaviour and calls on the police, attorney-general and the Home Ministry to take immediate and appropriate action under the law."

Cartoonist Zunar:

"Teresa Kok's video was not so funny, but the government's reaction towards the video made me laugh!

"That said, the government's inferiority complex is not an excuse to victimise the rakyat.

"Thus, I urge the government to drop all sort of nonsense against Teresa and learn to laugh at themselves, or otherwise face the decline of the popular vote to be beyond 47 percent."

Fariz Musa of NGO Jingga 13:

"We question whether such action is in Islamic teaching. If it is, show us where is it stated in the text and traditions. What are the comments and reactions of government ulamak (Islamic scholars)?"

"We also regret the statement to threaten Malaysians from Chinese and Indian ethnicity that are not fluent in Bahasa Melayu to be expelled from the country... this is really extreme.

"As an NGO with majority Malay Muslims, we feel ashamed and regretful that such actions are being carried out in the name of Malays and Islam.

"It is clearly irrelevant action and aimed at firing up racial sentiments while defaming the image and dignity of Islam to the non-Muslims."

Gerakan Youth chief Tan Keng Liang:

"Gerakan Youth urged the police to take action against the group of NGOs who had offered the slap reward. This is clearly an offer to assault a person, which is against the law.

"Even if any person is angered by the controversial video, no one should take the law into their own hands.

"The controversial video is not the culture of Malaysian Chinese community during the Chinese New Year festivities. No person should try to make it a race or religious issue."

Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG):

"That a group of men can, without any hesitation, openly and proudly incite violence against women, is a result of the environment of impunity the government has created - an environment that protects extremist groups at the cost of oppositional voices.

"The government must condemn and punish the perpetrators of this malicious attack, and ensure the protection of Kok immediately. Failure to do so would send the message that the government condones acts of violence against women and that violence against women is acceptable.

"The government must instead lead the way in promoting respect for women."

