

'Najib must speak up on conversion issue'

MalaysiaKini.com

Apr 12, 2014

While Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar has refused to act in a tussle between two parents in a child custody battle due to conflicting orders from the Syariah and civil court, it is up to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to make a stand, says constitutional expert Abdul Aziz Bari.

He said this in reference to a civil court decision which granted S Deepa custody of her children even though the Syariah court had given custody to the father, Izwan Abdullah who had converted their children to Islam without his ex-wife's knowledge.

"The inspector general of police was quite right to say that there were two orders. He is not a minister or member of the administration. IGP is a mere public servant despite his high rank.

"(The) Najib administration must make its stand over the conversion case confusion," he said in a statement yesterday.

Deepa had claimed Izwan assaulted her and abducted their children after the civil court decision, adding that she had been assaulted several times before this.

However, Khalid refused to act, urging the duo to talk it out instead.

Abdul Aziz said Najib's stance on the issue is needed more so as his ministers are making statements on behalf the government.

He was referring to Tourism Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz who lambasted Khalid for his non-action on a "clear cut case of kidnapping". Nazri was previously de facto law minister.

He had reportedly said civil law should apply as it was a marriage under civil law before Izwan converted to Islam.

"Nazri is a member of the cabinet and what he says reflect the cabinet's view. Hence the necessity of the government making an official stand on the matter," said Abdul Aziz.

Abdul Aziz pointed out that Najib's ministers have been making statements on the government's behalf and this is similarly the case with Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom endorsing hudud law in Kelantan.

"They (Najib's administration) must also state clearly what (is) it's official policy now on Hudud especially after minister Jamil Khir has come out in public supporting Kelantan (on introducing the law)," he said.

Without word from the prime minister, he added, the public remains unclear on the government's official stance on critical issues.

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