

Soi Lek: Unfortunately, DAP is right
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Housing the largest number of Muslim MPs, Umno wields the power to derail its arch rival's attempt to implement hudud in Kelantan.

And this is one of those rare occasions where former MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek agreed with the argument coming from the DAP corner.

"Umno has 88 MPs and if the party chooses not to back PAS, the latter will not even dare table a Private Member's Bill on hudud," Chua told Malaysiakini.

"Unfortunately, I agree with DAP leaders who call on MCA to convince Umno... It is logical," he added.

Commenting on the threat by MCA Youth to lay siege on Parliament if the Bill is tabled, Chua said a ruling party should not resort to such opposition-like modus operandi, but exhaust internal channels instead.

In view of this, Chua called on his successor Liow Tiong Lai to flex his muscles and do more than just attend roadshows with Chinese associations.

By virtue of being the president of the second biggest component party in the ruling coalition, he said, Liow must spearhead the charge.

Chua also wants his successor to make his position crystal clear that MCA would not toe the BN line if the Bill is tabled in Parliament.

"Don't just ask DAP to prevent PAS from tabling the Bill. That is outside of BN, something must be done within BN," he said.

Raise it with BN supreme council

Chua suggested that the MCA president leads a delegation of representatives from Chinese-based parties in the BN to meet Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The delegation, he stressed, must impress upon the prime minister that these parties oppose the implementation of hudud and that such a move would run foul of the 1Malaysia concept.

"Furthermore, Liow should push for this to be raised at the BN supreme council. Most of the parties in BN are non-Muslim in terms of composition and they will disagree as well.

"This move will empower MCA to fight the battle even before the matter is raised in Parliament. So BN parties must unite to reject the implementation of hudud," he added.

Chua, who recalled how he had once remarked that MCA must re-look its position in BN should Umno insist on hudud, was asked what would be the next step if Najib refused to listen.

The former MCA president believes that such a situation would not arise since Najib was not an unreasonable leader and that he listened to dissenting views.

Asked if MCA's demand would fall on deaf ears, given that Umno now considered regaining Chinese support a forlorn mission, preferring instead to focus on Malay/Muslim votes, Chua turned the tables on DAP instead.

"This is why the Chinese community should back BN and not DAP... Because DAP is tied to Pakatan Rakyat and therefore linked to PAS.

"We also don't know if the two Muslim MPs in DAP (Raub's Ariff Sabri and Bukit Bendera's Zairil Khir Johari) will vote against the Bill or support it based on religious obligation," he added.

Chua also recounted how he had raised the spectre of hudud in the past but was accused of deliberately attempting to strike fear in the hearts of the Chinese.

"In 2011, I already started the ball rolling, telling voters that if you empower Pakatan, especially PAS, the Islamic party will push for the hudud agenda.

"I warned that if the matter went to Parliament, like now, all Muslim MPs would be faced with a dilemma," he said.

Back then, Chua claimed, even Liow and several top MCA leaders refused to lend their support to the campaign, fearing that it would antagonise Umno leaders and Malay voters in their respective constituencies.