

## **Sultan 'duty-bound' to right menteri besar crisis**

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COMMENT Things are getting more confused by the day, especially when there are reports that the Azmin Ali camp in PKR disagrees with the nomination of party president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as the new menteri besar of Selangor.

This was evident from what happened during the press conference called by the Selangor PKR deputy chief and MP for Ampang, Zuraida Kamarudin, on Wednesday.

So, apart from the insistence of PAS that Abdul Khalid Ibrahim be retained as menteri besar, one can clearly see cracks developing among PKR assemblypersons.

Both of these problems have worsened the crisis that has undermined the standing of Khalid as menteri besar as well as his state executive council.

I still believe that constitutionally calling for an election following the dissolution of the state assembly is the most sensible thing to do - not only to clear the confusion and uncertainty but more importantly, to put Selangor back on normality as far as routine management is concerned.

At the moment, there are many critical decisions that cannot be made as the state bureaucrats are waiting for the green light from the politicians - the menteri besar and the state exco - who are currently in a state of flux. And to make the matter worse, the PKR party elections have also been chaotic.

The Selangor taxpayers have every right to end the stalemate. While the politicians have every right to fight among themselves, life must go on for the ordinary people.

As I have said earlier, the sultan is under a duty to put things right, especially when the politicians have turned their backs on the rakyat. Many people misunderstand the sultan's role in such a situation: it is not about giving the palace the opportunity to interfere but just to get things right.

### **Constitutional duty**

The sultan has a constitutional duty to make sure that there is a functioning government. Khalid may say that he is 'enjoying his work' as menteri besar despite the pressure, but we all know that he cannot be sure whether the majority in the House support him.

If Khalid is honest, he should be willing to put that to test: convene the House and see how many assemblypersons are actually behind him. The only basis for Khalid to stay in office is

majority support, not whether he enjoys his work or not.

Under the Selangor constitution, the government head must resign should the majority deserted him. And when that happens, it is the duty on the part of the sultan to appoint a new government, either from the existing assemblypersons or through a fresh election.

As a constitutional monarch, the sultan's job is to make sure that the constitutional process proceeds regardless. He must remove anything that stands in its way.

In essence, the dissolution is the way the sultan can contribute towards strengthening democracy in the state. Given the quarrels now I think it is only proper and logical that the people of Selangor be allowed to decide who they want to rule the state.

I have stated that in normal circumstances, it is the menteri besar who has the power to make a request for dissolution. However, given the situation in Selangor, it is wishful thinking that Khalid would ask for one.

Constitutionally, it is not proper for the sultan to let the situation get worse. He can, and should, do something to put a stop to it.

If he is not sure, he can ask the people of Selangor - something that is not difficult to do today - as to whether he should dissolve the state assembly so that they can put a new government to advise him.

With Facebook, Twitter and so on, it is not difficult to gauge what the people of Selangor want. The time when politicians monopolise the right to decide has gone.

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