

See you in court, PKR rep says of Permata probe

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PKR Taman Medan assemblyperson Haniza Talha has refused to entertain questions from the police, beyond saying, "I will see you in court."

She was called to give her statement at the Petaling Jaya police headquarters today over a sedition probe.

The investigation was over an article criticising budget allocations to the prime minister's wife Rosmah Mansor's Permata project.

Haniza, who was accompanied by her lawyer G Sivamalar, said she refused to answer any questions as she felt they were meant to trap her.

"I refused to answer any of the questions posed by the investigating officer (IO) Hasbuhullah Muda.

"I told him I would only answer and give further details to them (police) in court," she told reporters outside the station.

The PKR rep added she felt the IO's questions, one of which was if "she thought her statement in the article was seditious or not" was meant as a trap.

Haniza, who is also deputy head of the PKR national women's wing, was called in after the police received two reports, one from a group in Kelana Jaya and another from an officer in Putrajaya, claiming that the article published in PKR's website was seditious in nature.

The offending article is 'Subsidi dipotong demi Permata Rosmah RM711 juta' (Subsidy cut over RM711 million for Rosmah's Permata), in which Haniza questioned the government allocation to the preschool programme, pointing out the government already has programmes for preschoolers.

Haniza said that while she was being questioned, the IO did not specify which part of the article was seditious, thus she concluded the report was made as a threat to not question the government.

"I was not told which part of the article was seditious. It wasn't explained to me.

"So, I see this (police report) as a threat to any other parties out there who questions, and to be specific, this Permata programme," she said.

Haniza, who was surrounded by her supporters, pointed out it was her job as an

assembly person to questions the allocation and how it would be used.

"But even if I, as a representative of the people is accused of being seditious, I fear any other ordinary person without locus standi would have a worse fate than me," she said.

Silence the opposition

By accusing her of sedition, Haniza said this merely illustrated that the Act is being used as a selective prosecution to "silence the opposition".

Sivamalar then said that Haniza is only the first to be called in for questioning by the police.

"PKR Srikandi chief Siti Aishah Shaik Ismail and the writer of the article Nadia Hanafi would be called shortly to give their statements as well. But we were given no further details," she said.

Meanwhile, PKR lawmaker N Surendran said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's decision of retaining the Sedition Act "to maintain national harmony" as "untrue and completely dishonest".

He pointed out in a statement today that Haniza's case shows "the great injustice and potential abuse of the colonialist sedition law".

"How can it be a crime for an elected representative to question a budget allocation? What has questioning the budget got to do with racial harmony?"

"It is particularly outrageous that the Act is being used against elected representatives like Haniza, who are raising matters of public interest on behalf of the rakyat," he said.

Inspector Hasbuhullah, has refused to comment on the matter.