

## **Gov't aims to tighten leash on social media**

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**By Kamles Kumar**

PARLIAMENT The Communications and Multimedia Ministry is looking to amend and revamp the laws governing social media in light of the increased misuse of the medium, said its minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek today.

"The ministry is looking to amend wholly the current Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and the Communications and Multimedia Commission Act 1998 to improve enforcement," he told the Dewan Rakyat today.

He was responding to the question posed by Bung Moktar Radin (BN-Kinabatangan) who asked if the ministry plans to control the use of social media to prevent misconduct and what type of punishment would be meted out.

The amendments, Shabery said, are expected to be tabled either in October this year or early next year.

Shabery also said the government has already prosecuted several people who misused the social media to incite racial and religious tension as well as insulting the monarchy.

"There have been several cases involving those who have insulted the Raja-Raja, where the culprits have been charged and slapped with fines amounting up to RM200,000.

"The ministry is also currently investigating several other cases, including the case of Alvin Tan and a few others, which has been submitted to the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC)," he added.

Meanwhile, Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) asked what was the ministry doing to combat the recruitment of Malaysians via social media into terrorist group Islamic State (IS), to which Shabery replied that even Facebook has taken measures to address this threat.

"There have been a lot of people taking advantage of social media including to spread terrorism and false news. We view the IS issue seriously, as a few sites had been used to recruit people.

"We leave it to the police to investigate this matter. Facebook itself has come out with a statement that its site is misused in recruitment and they will be limiting or blocking their access to the offenders," he added.

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