

'DAP, PKR Muslim MPs, declare stand on hudud'

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By Susan Loone

Gerakan has challenged Pakatan Rakyat Muslim MPs to publicly declare which way they would vote if a bill is tabled in Parliament to enable Kelantan's syariah enactment to come into force.

Gerakan's national legal and human rights bureau chief Baljit Singh urged DAP's two Muslim MPs and PKR's 16 to make a clear stand if they would vote for the hudud bill if the matter is tabled in Parliament.

He said PKR MPs, including PKR deputy president Azmin Ali (right) (Gombak) and his vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar (Pantai Dalam) have yet to declare their positions on the matter.

"Their silence is deafening. Be man enough to step forward and make a stand (on whether you will vote for or against the hudud)," Baljit told Malaysiakini.

"Abstaining from voting is not good enough; we are not asking you to go against your religion," he added.

Baljit said if DAP and PKR MPs do not support the bill, whoever tables it in Parliament would not get the two-thirds majority needed to amend the federal constitution.

In the 222-seat Dewan Rakyat, PAS has 21 MPs, Umno 88, with one - Beluran MP and deputy house speaker Ronald Kiandee - being a non-Muslim from East Malaysia.

Umno, PAS insufficient numbers

Umno and PAS alone can't make hudud happen, he said.

Their combined forces of 108 MPs (assuming that Ronald votes against hudud) is not enough to pass the law, as even a simple majority requires 112 votes.

"Umno and PAS may vote for the bill but mathematically, they can't get the numbers to make a majority," said Baljit.

Experts disagree on whether a constitutional amendment is required to allow hudud to be implemented, with some arguing that it only requires a change in the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965.

The federal constitution says that criminal justice is under federal, and not state jurisdiction, except for that which falls under the syariah courts.

The Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1995 says syariah courts can only impose a maximum RM5,000 fine, six strokes of whipping and/or three year jail sentence as punishment.

Punishments under the Kelantan hudud enactment passed at state level yesterday include amputation, stoning, whipping and death.

'Non-Muslims must unite'

Baljit called on non-Muslim MPs across the board to unite to protect the federal constitution, the highest law of the land.

"Be rational, put politics second and prioritise defending the constitution," Baljit, a lawyer, said.

Baljit (left) said Gerakan will be working with BN Muslim MPs in Sabah and Sarawak to ensure they vote against the bill.

He said this in response to calls from DAP for Gerakan and MCA to stop its ally Umno from supporting the Islamic law.

He dismissed the notion that BN supported the Kelantan hudud law, which was unanimously passed by the Kelantan state legislative assembly yesterday with the support of Umno Kelantan assemblypersons.

"Only Umno assemblypersons supported it, with PAS and one PKR representative at the Kelantan state assembly," Baljit noted.

PKR however had ordered its Guchil assemblyperson Roslan Puteh not to participate or cast his vote for the bill.

Roslan, and sole PKR representative in the Kelantan assembly, was ambiguous when asked if he voted on the bill yesterday.

"So what action will PKR take against Roslan?" Baljit asked.

Roslan when asked by Malaysiakini if he voted said he did not raise his hand but refused to entertain further requests for clarifications.

Baljit assured Gerakan's two MPs - party president Mah Siew Keong (BN - Teluk Intan) and secretary-general Liang Teck Meng (BN - Simpang Rengam) will vote against the bill as they have made their positions clear.

"DAP slept with the enemy of its enemy, but now finds out they have been sleeping with the bigger enemy," he said.

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