The hudud 'plot' will destroy Malaysia
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By Lim Kit Siang

MP SPEAKS The month-long Parliamentary meeting which started on March 9 and adjourned in the early hours of April 10 has gravely undermined and damaged both the political coalitions in the country, the Barisan Nasional and Pakatan Rakyat.

It has been said that truth is stranger than fiction.

While the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Razak may rejoice that the "hudud" plot of the Umno's "UG" (unity government) conspirators has succeeded in causing grave damage to Pakatan, he should rue its threat not only to BN but the Malaysian federation as well.

Najib had not realised that the "hudud" weapon of Umno "UG" plotters' is a double-edged sword, which could not only damage the unity and solidarity of Pakatan with its success to entice PAS support with purported Umno endorsement for PAS Kelantan state government hudud implementation, it also threatens the unity and even survival of BN and the Malaysian Federation as well.

In fact, the "hudud" plot of the Umno "UG" conspirators has the potential not only to destroy both coalitions, BN and Pakatan, but also the nation or bring about a realignment of political forces in the country.

The warning signals are clear for all who have eyes to see.

East Malaysians standing up

Three days ago, for instance, the Kuching Ministers' Fellowship (KMF), a network of church pastors and leaders in Sarawak, joined the Sabah Council of Churches in criticising the passing of the 2015 Kelantan Shariah Criminal Code Enactment with the support of UMNO Kelantan state assemblypersons, as Kelantan's hudud enactment violates the secular foundation upon which Malaya, Sabah, and Sarawak had formed Malaysia.

The KMF chairman Pastor Daron Tan said in a statement: "The recently-passed Kelantan hudud enactment is in direct contradiction to the aspirations of the founding fathers of our nation to keep Malaysia a secular state, as evidenced in several historical documents that explicitly state this.

"The introduction of hudud law is a fundamental breach and deviation from the expressed commitment to complete religious freedom, a key term underpinning the Malaysia Agreement signed in July 1963 between Sarawak, Sabah, and Malaya."

Tan stressed that the criminal justice system remains under federal jurisdiction, as stated in the Ninth Schedule of the Federal Constitution.

“Any fundamental change to this package changes the very basis upon which the Christians in Sarawak also agreed to form Malaysia and it requires a thorough re-negotiation of the Federal Constitution,” he said.

The Sabah Council of Churches said last month that Kelantan’s plans to enforce hudud in the state amounts to a “betrayal” of Sabah’s trust when it agreed to form Malaysia with Malaya and Sarawak.

Three days ago, the Civil Society Organisations of Sabah and Sarawak, representing 33 civic organizations, called for a thorough renegotiation of the Federal Constitution if Kelantan insists to enforce its Syariah Criminal Code 2015.

It stressed: “Secular justice system on crimes as a federal jurisdiction is part of the entire constitutional package embodied in the Ninth Schedule of the Federal Constitution. Any fundamental change to this packaged deal requires a thorough renegotiation of the Federal Constitution.”

It ended with the call on the Federal Government or the Sabah and Sarawak state governments to convene a Malaysia summit attended by all lawmakers and executive branch at the federal and state levels to deliberate on a new federal constitutional arrangement, whereby Sabah and Sarawak may have other rights devolved if Kelantan were to have its own criminal justice system.

Summit for a new Malaysia

I will attend such a Malaysia summit if it is convened to discuss the subject of a thorough renegotiation of the Federal Constitution.

Najib must be forewarned that the Umno “UG” conspirators should not be allowed to continue to play with fire as it could lead not only to the disintegration of Pakatan, but also BNl and even the Malaysian Federation.

The Umno “UG” conspiracy to entice PAS support to break up Pakatan began a year ago on March 27, 2014, with the Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department in charge of Islamic affairs, Jamil Khir Baharom, surprising even PAS leaders with his completely unanticipated overture in Parliament that the Umno/BN federal government was ready to work with the PAS Kelantan state government to implement the hudud law in Kelantan.

The Umno “UG” conspirators were so successful that they have caused not only enormous damage to the unity and solidarity of Pakatan, they have also gained the collateral benefit of drowning out all the issues currently haunting Umno and the Prime Minister – the 1MDB scandal; the GST implementation; the repressive laws with the passage of Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) Bill and Sedition Amendment Bill; Anwar Ibrahim’s five-year jailing; Mongolian Altantunya Shaariibuu’s 2006 murder and conviction of two former police commandos Azila Hadri and Sirul Azhar with motives neither established nor

pursued; the new jet for PM; the lavish spending on wedding of Najib's daughter and above all, Najib's survival as Prime Minister and Umno president with the open challenge by former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

It's 'just politics'

But Umno's apparent support for PAS' Kelantan hudud enactment was "just politics", as admitted by the former deputy Higher Education Minister and CEO of Global Movement of Moderates (GMM), Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah at a summit organised in Brisbane by the Malaysian Students' Council of Australia (MASCA) two days ago.

Saifuddin said support for hudud is not "mainstream" but exists only on the fringes, and the mainstream is moderation and democracy.

He said while the Quran uses the word "hudud" 14 times, none of the mentions involves a fixed punishment, but instead appears in relation to marriage, divorce and kindness to orphans.

Saifuddin's statement tallies with what a celebrated Malaysian surgeon in California and writer, Bakri Musa recently wrote about hudud in his recent blog, 'The Curse of The Obsession With Single-Issue Politics':

"Hudud also creates an unnecessary chasm between Muslims and non-Muslims. Islam should bring us together. To Muslims the Quran is the word of Allah, its message for all mankind and till the end of time. That is a matter of faith.

"While hudud is based on the Quran, it is not the Quran. The present understanding of hudud is but the version interpreted by the ancient Bedouins. It is the handiwork of mortals, with all its imperfections. We should not be bound by it but be open to more enlightened readings of the holy book."

Not anti-Islam

Saifuddin and Bakri's views on hudud deserve serious attention, as there is an irresponsible attempt to accuse anyone who disagrees with the PAS hudud enactment as anti-Islam.

Yusuf Qaradawi, the chairperson of the International Union of Muslim Scholars, had said that the problem is not with the application of hudud, but with their misapplication; that is, applying them without meeting their conditions.

Internationally noted Muslim scholar Tariq Ramadan had called for a moratorium on hudud punishments, as (1) Muslim scholars are not in agreement on the interpretations given to the texts upon which these practices are based, nor do they agree on the required conditions in which they would be applicable; and (2) the application of the hudud laws today is used by repressive powers to abuse women, the poor and political opponents

within a quasi-legal vacuum and with a total disrespect for human dignity.

In May 2012 in Hulu Terengganu, PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang said hudud could only be implemented if there are adequate conditions, giving as examples that if there is no minimum wage provision or resolution of the unemployment problem, the conditions for implementation for hudud do not exist.

The majority of Islamic countries in the world have not implemented hudud. Surely no one is seriously suggesting that these Islamic countries are anti-Islam?

The Umno "UG" plot using hudud as a bait to disrupt PAS and damage Pakatan Rakyat has come full circle, with the PAS president and Marang MP Abdul Hadi Awang following up on the Kelantan enactment of the 2015 Syariah Criminal Code with a private member's bill motion in Parliament in the last three days of the Parliamentary meeting and Jamil Khir's reply in the last day of the parliamentary meeting that Kelantan's hudud enactment must comply with the Federal Constitution before it could be implemented.

But Hadi's private member's bill motion did not come up for debate in Parliament in the April meeting, and it will suffer the same fate in the May meeting of Parliament, unless Najib want to see not only the disintegration of BN but also the Malaysian Federation as well.

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