

Putrajaya's 'game of hudud' angers PAS MP

MalaysiaKini.com

Jun 18, 2015

By Koh Jun Lin

PARLIAMENT Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena) has voiced dissatisfaction with the government dawdling on revealing its stance on the Kelantan hudud issue.

He said this during an exchange with Dewan Rakyat Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia in parliament today, where he insinuated that the government is not supportive of PAS' private member's bill that would enable the implementation of hudud in the state.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim interjected to say this is not the government's stance.

However, when pressed to reveal its position, Shahidan replied that minister in charge of Islamic affairs Jamil Khir Baharom would respond.

"Answer it today! Today is the last day of the sitting. You want to wait until which sitting? This is a game," Mahfuz protested, before Pandikar ordered the duo to sit down.

Earlier, he asked the speaker why the bill moved by Abdul Hadi Awang (PAS-Marang) only appeared on the parliament's order paper yesterday, which is the second last day of the current sitting.

He also asked why the bill is the last on a list of 26 motions, although Hadi had proposed it months ago.

"I would like to know whether it would be given way, because the minister in prime minister's department from Jerai (Jamil Khir) had promised in this parliament to make room if we bring issues pertaining to amendments to Act 355 (Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965," he said.

Explanation given in office

Pandikar (photo) replied that he had already explained this to him, Hadi, and Takiyuddin Hassan (PAS-Kota Bahru) in his office before, and there is no need repeat his reasons.

He also accused Mahfuz of trying to drag him into a political agenda by raising the question in the sitting, but obliged with a response anyway.

He said the bill was added to the order paper because it was found to meet the necessary criteria for a private member's bill, but the Standing Orders require that government bills be debated first.

"If a private member's bill such as this hudud motion is well-received by the government,

the government itself would table the motion, and thus Standing Order 15 does not apply and the motion can be debated," the speaker said.

Mahfuz then 'thanked' Pandikar for clarifying that the government is not prepared to make way for the bill to be debated, to which Pandikar retorted that those are not his words and is only Mahfuz's interpretation.

He also reminded Mahfuz that the Standing Orders forbid members from involving the speaker in their speeches, and again accused Mahfuz of dragging him into a political agenda.

Agong's consent not needed

At the parliament lobby later, Mahfuz slammed the government for their hypocrisy by breaking its promise to expand the syariah court's jurisdiction.

He also rebutted Tourism and Culture Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz Mohamed's (photo) statement that Hadi had disrespected the Agong by not seeking his consent first before tabling the bill.

"MPs don't need to seek consent from the Agong before tabling a private member bill, thus he did not disrespect Agong," he told reporters.

On the contrary, he said it is Putrajaya that was kurang ajar (insolent) because it is them who should be seeking an audience with Agong to discuss PAS' private member's bill.

Previously Nazri had told Malaysiakini that bills related to religion needs consent from the Conference of Rulers before it is tabled in Parliament.

"How can we discuss a bill on hudud when the Agong has not even been briefed? That is kurang ajar," Nazri, who was former law minister and former minister in charge of parliamentary affairs, during an interview on June 13.

Meanwhile on Facebook, Wong Chen (PKR-Kelana Jaya) (photo) claimed that Mahfuz was trying to provoke his party's conservative faction to respond, but to no avail.

"Mahfuz was baiting a reaction from the PAS ulama MPs. To everyone's surprise, none of the ulama group stood up to fight for Hadi Awang's bill.

"All the ulama MPs sheepishly continued to sit quietly including Nik Abduh Nik Aziz (PAS-Pasir Mas). So there you have it.

"Outside the Dewan the ulamas champion hudud as a holy calling, but in the Dewan, they can't be bothered to question a minister's arbitrary decision," he said today.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/302272>