

I risked jail because it is the right thing to do, says Rafizi

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PKR secretary-general Rafizi Ramli insists that disclosing the Official Secrets Act (OSA) documents was the right thing to do in his fight against government corruption, despite criticism that he was risking jail and losing his parliamentary seat for something trivial.

"I have to say this, it is the one part which I disagree with a majority of people. I always do anything intuitively - that it's the right thing to do," he told Malaysiakini.

"I'm sorry, there's nothing I can do about it, that's how I was brought up. Regardless of what the whole world thinks, my conscience is the most important thing to me than anything else."

Fresh from his three-day remand, the Pandan MP is currently out on bail after claiming trial to two charges under the OSA.

Although some had praised his action in disclosing confidential documents regarding the Lembaga Tabung Angkatan Tentera (LTAT) and 1MDB, many had also criticised him, pointing out that he could lose his parliamentary seat for what is just literally a piece of paper, arguing that he is worth more to the fight outside instead of inside a cell.

Rafizi, however, begged to differ.

"No matter how great you are as a politician, the moment you think you are so important, that you have to be calculative, I think that's wrong," he said.

The PKR vice-president stressed that there should not be any calculation made in the first place when it comes to fighting for something that is right and doing the right thing.

Society's problem, he said, is precisely because most people calculate risks.

"Umno people know that a particular thing is wrong, but then they calculate it and know that it is not worth the risk; that is the ill of the society.

"If I have to walk through the prison gates to do the right thing, so be it," said Rafizi, who admitted that he was lucky that his family believes and feels the same way.

He also reminded the public how a particular struggle does not survive because of only two or three people.

"If that's how people think, then we have a long way to go."

Meanwhile, speaking about his three-day remand, Rafizi has only nice things to say about the men in blue.

“The police officers were nice and very professional,” said Rafizi, who shared a cell with two juveniles aged 16 and 17.

Due to the bad food at the lockup, Rafizi mostly ate bread and buns. Joking that being detained was a good opportunity to lose weight, Rafizi even lost 1kg in the three days he spent behind lock-up bars.

‘Cops are victims of circumstances’

In a statement later, Rafizi said any criticism against the police should be aimed at the top leadership like the inspector-general of police, instead of at the rank and file, who are only trying to do their job professionally.

Again heaping praise on the police, the lawmaker sought to correct misconceptions about them, stressing that most of them are merely victims of circumstances.

“I never had problems with even a single police officer, even the ones who arrested me.

“It’s time to leave them alone, stop judging the common policemen, leave the rank and file alone because they just want to do their job,” he stressed.

Pointing out how police officers get ‘barked at’ by both Umno and the opposition, this had led to them being stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Explaining further about the ‘handcuff fiasco’, Rafizi said the police knew that “Umno will bark at them if they didn’t handcuff him”.

“I wanted to be handcuffed, because I told them they would be in trouble if they didn’t.

“It was the decision of the officers that I then put my hands at the back as they wanted to balance things. They would then hold me and it was to be a win-win situation.

“But TV3 zoomed in and got them into the trouble,” he lamented.

Rafizi therefore urged all quarters, both the BN and the opposition, to leave matters related to handling a detainee to those in charge.

“If they overstep the legal boundary, I can sue them. I hope even Pakatan supporters don’t make a fuss about it.

“In fact, if they want to chain me, I’m okay, so long as it’s within the boundaries of law,” he said.

Yesterday, inspector-general of police Khalid Abu Bakar denied that Rafizi was handcuffed during his detention. Photographs also emerged showing the PKR lawmaker with his hands behind his back but with no handcuffs.

This led to accusations that Rafizi was pretending to be handcuffed in order to gain sympathy.

His lawyer refuted this, claiming that police officers had instructed his client to keep his hands behind following his arrest on Tuesday.

However, Khalid dismissed this as “cooking up fairy tales to confuse the public”. But Rafizi insisted that the orders were from the police officers in charge.

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