

**Motion over 'menstruation' remarks rejected**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**May 10, 2007**  
**Ooi Kelly and Bede Hong**

The Dewan Rakyat today rejected a motion by Opposition MP Fong Po Kuan who wanted two BN members of Parliament censured for making comments about her menstruation.

Amidst pandemonium that broke out during the afternoon's debate over the leaks in Parliament yesterday, Bung Mokhtar Radin (BN – Kinabatangan) had stood and made off-mike comments over the Batu Gajah parliamentarian's menstrual cycle.

The parliamentarians, during a debate, among others, on the lack of maintenance resulting in leaks in the Parliament building after heavy downpours, had attacked one of the opposition members who raised the issue.

"Where's the leak? The Batu Gajah MP leaks every month too," Bung said referring to DAP representative of the constituency, Fong Po Kuan [video clip].

His comments were carried today by Utusan Malaysia, China Press and Sin Chew Daily.

Mohd Said Yusof (BN – Jasin) was also named for censure making similar remarks.

This morning, Fong called for a motion under the Standing Order 26 (1P) to refer the two BN MPs to the Committee of Privileges.

However Speaker Ramli Ngah Talib shot down the motion, with reason that the issue was not raised at the time of incident.

**Technical knock out**

DAP MPs protested that they had not heard the comments made by the two BN MPs due to the commotion in the House.

"During the incident at 12:37 pm yesterday, the offending remarks were uttered. The YBs have a chance to voice their displeasure (then). However, this issue was put forth only this morning," said Ramli.

"As the matter must be raised at the time of the incident, and the issue occurred yesterday, I must reject the motion for the Standing Order," he added.

Opposition leader Lim Kit Siang protested: "... the remarks were not heard yesterday. There was chaos and pandemonium. The earliest that we knew of the remarks was this morning when the comments were published [by several national dailies]."

"Do we allow this sexist, offensive remarks to pass. They are celebrating, that the motion is rejected," said Lim, pointing at BN MPs who were thumping at their desks.

De-facto law minister Nazri Aziz, who read out the bills of the day, left the Dewan Rakyat at this juncture.

## **Insulting to all women**

In a press conference later, Fong expressed her regret over the decision: "I feel sad that no woman MP in the Dewan just now voiced their objection to the comments that were insulting to all women.

DAP MP Teresa Kok said the matter was not new: "Each time a gender sensitive issue comes out ... each time derogatory remarks were made against women, there is no action taken by the speaker."

Lim said, "The Kinabatangan MP (Mokhtar) behaved as though he has no mother, or daughters or sisters. And the BN can thump unashamedly at the rejection of the motion on technical ground."

Lim called on the prime minister to "discipline the two BN MPs."

Both MPs did not deny making the comments.

When reproached by M Kulasegaran (DAP – Ipoh Barat) at this morning's debate session, Mohd Said replied, "She shouldn't have shouted like that when I wanted to discuss important things."

To censure a fellow MP, backbenchers and the opposition have the option of raising a substantive motion. The motion, however, requires a week's notice and is not required for open debate.

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