

Book ban: Malaysiakini to take Home Ministry to court
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Malaysiakini plans to mount a court challenge against the Home Ministry's decision yesterday to ban 1Funny Malaysia - a cartoon book published by the independent news portal.

The controversial book, published in December last year by Malaysiakini's subsidiary Kinibooks, is a compilation of political cartoons that have appeared on Malaysiakini - by Zulkifli Anwar Ulhaque, better known as Zunar.

NONEThe Home Ministry has deemed the book "not suitable and detrimental to public order" and said it could "influence the people to revolt against the leaders and government policies."

In addition to 1Funny Malaysia, two other comic books by Zunar were also banned.

Malaysiakini chief executive officer Premesh Chandran described the action by Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to ban the book as "peculiar".

"The cartoons in 1Funny Malaysia have already been published on the Malaysiakini website (in the Cartoonkini section). As far as we know, there has been no revolt against the government since they were uploaded," said Premesh.

He said Malaysiakini will therefore immediately file for a judicial review of the Home Ministry's decision.

Show a little sense of humour

Chandran called on the government to be more tolerant and appreciative of the diverse viewpoints expressed by Malaysians.

book where is justice"Parody and satire are integral elements of a lively democracy. It's high time the government takes a less high-handed approach and show that they, too, have a sense of humour," he said.

Chandran is also demanding that the Home Ministry reveal the fate of another Malaysiakini-published book - Where is Justice? - which was seized from bookstores along with 1Funny Malaysia four months ago.

Where is Justice? is a collection of articles on the issue of death and torture of detainees while being held under police custody focusing on four prominent cases - Teoh Beng Hock, A Kugan, Altantuya Shaariibuu and Anwar Ibrahim.

When contacted, the Home Ministry's Quran Publication and Text Division assistant secretary Abdul Razak Latiff said:

"We have yet to decide on the fate of Where is Justice? I believe the book is still being studied."

He refused to comment further.

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