

Zahrain should stop dabbling with petty gutter politics
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I am both bemused and disturbed by what I read on Malaysiakini. Indeed, I find a similar story on two other online news portals. I am referring to what my former PKR colleague Zahrain Hashim said about Zaid Ibrahim's links with the 'fugitive' political blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin (to me, he's the victim of political persecution because of his outspoken views).

What Zahrain said and is trying to insinuate both bemuses and disturbs me; hence, this letter to Malaysiakini.

Firstly, I find it completely ironic that someone of Zahrain's standing – he is after all a member of parliament – could say such a ridiculous thing. What is he really trying to say? That PKR or Zaid Ibrahim is funding a fugitive? That somehow some opposition people are aiding and abetting RPK?

Zaid has openly admitted that he is a friend of RPK. So is Anwar Ibrahim and indeed, so am I. Is it a crime to be friends with someone who is being persecuted by an undemocratic and repressive government?

Secondly, what Zahrain is saying becomes even more ironic when he is widely known to be gallivanting with Umno people, not to mention accompanying Prime Minister Najib Razak on international trips.

Mind you, please recall that RPK is being hunted down like a fugitive precisely because he has revealed links between the murder of Altantuya Shaariibuu and the PM (and also his wife). So, Zahrain prefers to rub shoulders with the man who is tainted with murder rather than the man who blew the whistle?

Thirdly, I must admit that Zahrain made a very good suggestion, i.e. for the MACC to investigate who is funding the private investigator P Balasubramaniam. I agree that the MACC really should investigate who funds Bala and how he can afford to fly to and stay in London. Coincidentally, I read a statement by Bala's lawyer, Americk Sidhu, who had this to say:

"I have instructions from my client to say that he fully supports the suggestion made by Zahrain for the simple reason the money he is using to pay for his trip to London and his hotel accommodation there is derived from the funds he has received from Deepak Jaikishan at the behest of Rosmah Mansor, who ultimately and unwittingly is his sponsor."

Yes, MACC, please do take up Zahrain's suggestion and investigate Deepak Jaikishan and tell us if there is any truth to the above.

However, regarding the suggestion to investigate RPK's funder, I must say Zahrain made a boo-boo yet again. If I am not mistaken, the courts have thrown out the cases against RPK and at this moment there is no actual efforts by the government to bring RPK back to Malaysia to face any legal action.

Thus, strictly speaking, he is neither a fugitive nor a criminal. On the contrary, he is a political critic and a social activist who is in self-imposed exile. Is it a crime to contribute some money to a courageous man who dares to speak up so that his fellow Malaysians

know what is going on in our own country?

For reasons stated above, I am bemused. Now, why am I disturbed?

First, I see something very wrong with this picture, especially when a so-called independent lawmaker is dabbling into petty gutter politics. Zahrain claims that he left PKR because he has lost faith in the party and wants to serve the people better. Well, how does 'exposing' Zaid or PKR serve the people here? Does the people of Bayan Baru, or Malaysia for that matter, benefit from this so-called exposé?

Second, Zahrain is neither the leader of any political party nor supposed to be aligned to any political coalition. As an independent and upright politician, should he not be interested to hear RPK's side of the story? Why then is he kicking up a fuss when certain PKR leaders are in touch with RPK?

Last but not least, I would like to remind Zahrain and my other former colleagues out there, if their reasons for leaving PKR were sincere, then do your jobs as legislators and stop mucking around with petty politics. The people want to see the politicians getting on with the job of governing, creating good policies, introducing better laws and so forth – not more politicking, horse-trading and sabre-rattling.

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