

**Home Ministry suspends Suara Keadilan's permit
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The Home Ministry yesterday suspended PKR organ Suara Keadilan's publishing permit for running foul of the Printing Presses and Publication Act (PPPA).

The ministry said in a statement that it was not satisfied with the explanation provided by the weekly tabloid. Therefore, its annual publishing permit, which expired yesterday, would not be renewed.

The Suara Keadilan explanation was given for an article it reported in its June 21-29 edition that the Federal Land and Development Agency (Felda) is bankrupt.

suara keadilan newspaper 201106 Suara Keadilan chief editor Dzulkarnain Taib said the journal had defended the article on grounds of "fair comment" and that the public had the right of access to information on controversial issues.

"As of July 1, the publication is no longer valid and as such, it cannot be printed or published... according to Section 5(1) of the PPPA," said the ministry's publications and al-Quran text controls secretary Zaitun Ab Samad.

She said the decision was made by the ministry's Panel for Evaluating Printing and Publications Permit Applications (Panel 13), which is headed by its secretary-general Mahmood Adam.

Areas of dissatisfaction

Zaitun (below) said a letter on the decision would be sent to the publisher, outlining the areas the ministry was dissatisfied with.

NONE"The publisher will be required to respond to the letter. The application for the renewal of their permit - which expired on June 30 - will be considered after we have received a satisfactory explanation," she said.

The ministry reportedly sent Suara Keadilan three show-cause letters prior to the one on its Felda article, which was sent on June 28.

However, the publisher said it did not receive any of the three earlier letters and was not provided with copies when these were requested.

When contacted, Dzulkarnain confirmed that they had received the letter and will respond accordingly.

"Their letter did not specifically say why they were dissatisfied... We will reply, but our explanation would not be much different from what we previously stated," he said. He also questioned why the ministry had decided to stop them from printing when the decision was still under review.

"The ministry has even sent a letter to our printer to stop them from printing our next edition. It's very strange. By right, there should be an interim period because a decision has not been made.

"This gives people the impression that the ministry is under pressure to act, and that Suara Keadilan is targeted because of its connection to PKR leader Anwar Ibrahim," he said.

He added that they have yet to receive copies of the three show-cause letters sent prior to June 28, and that he will be in touch with Zaitun to get further clarification over why the ministry is dissatisfied.

"I am shocked. This is utter rubbish and certainly it is not an isolated incident. The government is trying to crack down on dissent. This is interfering with press freedom," Lee Boon Chye, vice president of PKR, told AFP, also citing the government's recent decisions to ban several political cartoons and TV shows.

"With or without a permit, we are going to publish our paper," Lee added.

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