

'Suara Keadilan' to defy Home Ministry directive
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PKR mouthpiece Suara Keadilan will put out its next edition in spite of the cloud of uncertainty over the renewal of its publishing permit.

"We are not sure what the government meant when they said that our permit is not renewed, but (that the publication is) not banned. Can we publish or not (pending) a decision to ban Suara Keadilan?" asked the party's director of strategy Tian Chua.

The Batu MP told reporters in Parliament today that this was just another of the government's "flip-flop" decisions.

The party organ's one-year publishing permit issued in July 2009 expired last week on June 30.

NONE Earlier reports stated that the Home Ministry, which oversees the licensing of publications, decided against renewing Suara Keadilan's permit as it was unhappy with chief editor Dzulkarnain Taib's explanation over an article containing allegations that the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) is bankrupt.

"As of July 1, the publication is no longer valid and as such, it cannot be printed or published...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

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

However, Zaitun also said that Suara Keadilan will be required to submit a "satisfactory explanation" to the ministry before it would consider any renewal application.

Yesterday, Zaitun reiterated that the Home Ministry has yet to decide on Suara Keadilan's renewal application.

NONE Commenting on this, Chua (left) said: "Basically, the government is (still) not giving us a clear position. We will still continue with our publication and we are not going to stop.

"I mean, there's no reason to why we should stop, and as we have said, we are the opposition-owned paper. There is no reason for us to glorify and to praise government, but instead provide critical viewpoints - it is our work.

"So, the government cannot use the excuse that we are undermining the image of the government as its (reason) to stop our publication."

He said that the delay in permit renewal was a "normal case" as it happens to many businesses, but they will publish this week's edition of the bi-monthly.

"Normally, by the time licence expires, (publications) haven't renewed it (their permit). But that does not mean they (the ministry has) revoked it," he said.

PKR vice-president Dr Lee Boon Chye had reportedly said earlier: "With or without a permit,

we are going to publish our paper."

Emergency motion on suspension

PKR vice-president and Gombak MP Azmin Ali filed an emergency motion today for the Dewan Rakyat to debate the suspension of Suara Keadilan's publishing permit.

"PKR finds that the Home Ministry's reason for suspending Suara Keadilan is absurd, ridiculous and filled with mala fide (bad faith) as surely it cannot expect an opposition newspaper to report only on party activities without any writing on current issues and the present government," he told a press conference in the Parliament lobby afterwards.

azmin ali pc in parliament 020709 02"We are tabling this motion because we believe it goes against press freedom and violates the rights of political parties to publish their own papers, and impeached upon the public right for access to fair and accurate information."

Azmin also accused the government of being "insecure" and "unable to respond in a civilised manner to the issues".

"There is no reason to take offence at the Felda bankruptcy story as Felda is (able) to respond to the allegations. And in any event, it has already initiated legal proceedings against the newspaper - which the party will defend," he added.

Subang parliamentarian R Sivarasa, who is also PKR vice-president, lambasted the ministry for acting in bad faith as the party had applied for the renewal of the permit on March 11, four months before expiry.

"However, the ministry had dragged and delayed the issue (instead of) looking into our renewal application. It shows their bad faith," he added.

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