

The law will rule on publishing permits
Malaysiakini.com
July 08, 2010

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein played down the significance of Suara Keadilan's permit issue, saying his ministry will act on its responsibilities.

If the PKR newsletter continued to print without its permit being renewed, he said, it would be against the law and the ministry would act under the Printing Presses and Publications Act (PPPA).

"This is the arrogance of those who do not follow the law. You have a licence, you can print, no licence you cannot print. If without a licence you still print, that is provoking us to take action," he said outside Parliament.

NONEHishammuddin (right) was responding to an earlier statement today by PKR adviser Anwar Ibrahim, who said the party had decided to go ahead with printing its next issue.

He denied that this was a warning against Suara Keadilan, repeating that it fell on his ministry to uphold the law.

"This is the reality and responsibility of the ministry. If it (the law) is not (enforced), there is no meaning for us to issue the licence."

Hishammuddin said this was not the first time the Home Ministry has taken stern action against any publication, adding that it was normal procedure.

"We must be consistent. In the past, this has involved the mainstream media such as Nanyang, Suara Perkasa... do they think Suara Keadilan is special?" he asked.

At an earlier press conference at the Parliament lobby, Anwar said while the government had every right to challenge the decision to continue printing the party organ, it was also the party's right to continue to print Suara Keadilan.

"They cannot resort to repressive measures to deny organisations and individuals the right to express themselves.

"They control the entire media in the country. Why do they feel so scared? The vulnerability is actually on the citizen against the might of the state," Anwar said.

NONEThe Pakatan Rakyat de-facto leader (left) added that the action against Suara Keadilan was a clear case of double standards as "racist" publications such as Utusan Malaysia were allowed to print "blatant lies".

He noted, however, that he in no way supported moves to ban any publication.

"People are for example demanding action against (Suara) Perkasa. I don't share that view. Let Perkasa have its say, but why deny others? That's my point... let there be a healthy exchange and reasoned discourse," he said.

Anwar said PKR's decision to proceed to print, made during last night's political bureau meeting, was merely to exercise its right and was not a challenge to the Home Ministry.

Asked if the party was concerned about a possible clampdown on Suara Keadilan's printing by the police, he shrugged it off.

"Shut down? Okay lah, He's an Umno branch chief," he said without making any specific reference.

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