

**Anti-false news panel 'requested by Harakah'
Malaysiakini.com
July 17, 2010**

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, in an eyebrow-raising statement, is crediting the birth of the 'anti-false news' panel to PAS, saying it was resulting from the "request by Harakah themselves".

hishammuddin home minister, seputeh division opening "They said that with the changing times, at least the guidelines, conditions and the letters to be complied with (must be clear). It is a fair request," said Hishammuddin (left) after launching the Seputeh Umno annual general meeting this afternoon.

"(The guidelines) must be clear, and the attorney-general is helping us with this," he said.

The minister will head the high-powered committee, which includes other cabinet members such as Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohamed Nazri Aziz and Information Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim.

They will be coming up with a new set of guidelines to regulate the media industry, and will discuss law amendments, training of investigating officers, treatment of witnesses and the definition of false news.

"The alternative media is now being regulated by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), that's where Rais comes in. The law needs to be changed under the AG's chambers, that's why Nazri is in the committee.

harakah edisi julai 2009 "And the Home Ministry involves licensing. We can only take action to withdraw or not renew the publishing permit, or through the sedition laws," he said.

But when asked about the need for the panel, when regulatory bodies such as the police and the MCMC already exist, Hishammuddin had some choice words.

"These institutions are being demonised. Whatever we do, people don't feel that, especially on politics of hate or politics of divide, and that someone is being targeted and allegations are repeated over and over again, people don't believe in the institutions.

"(The panel is being created) so that the people who are cynical will accept," he said after launching the Seputeh Umno annual general meeting in the afternoon.

Coy about FOI

When asked about the unprecedented Freedom of Information enactment that the Pakatan Selangor government tabled in the state legislative assembly several days ago, Hishammuddin had the wait-and-see attitude whether the bill contravenes existing federal laws.

NONE "We'll see when they do it, we'll do some analysis. But it's not within my purview anyway," said the Umno vice-president.

Exco Elizabeth Wong (right) had tabled the sunshine law on Wednesday which, if implemented, will open up all the state government books to the public - as long as it does not threaten national security.

Hishammuddin was however quick to take a jibe at the Opposition.

"When the information reported (in the press) does not favour them, like the report by Sin Chew, or Utusan ... they'll ask for a boycott.

"Where is the freedom of speech? (They only want it) when it supports and reflects their cause. That is just unfair," he said.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/137630>