

**Felda sues Suara Keadilan for RM200 million
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The Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) today filed a RM200 million suit in the Kuala Lumpur High Court against PKR party organ Suara Keadilan for claiming in an article that the agency had gone bankrupt.

NONEThe defamation suit, filed under Felda and Felda Global Ventures Holdings Sdn Bhd, named six respondents including PKR president Dr Wan Azizah wan Ismail (left) and her deputy Syed Husin Ali as the first and second respondents.

The suit also named Suara Keadilan publisher Pelita Koridor Sdn Bhd, printer Percetakan NPK Sdn Bhd, editor Dzulkarnain Taib and journalist Rusnizam Mahat as the third to sixth respondents.

In their statement of claim, filed on their behalf by lead counsel Mohd Hafarizam Harun, Felda and its subsidiary contend that three articles run by Suara Keadilan - which claimed the agency has gone bankrupt, among other things - had caused "grave and extensive" damage to Felda's reputation.

Felda also contend that the articles and defamatory words used by the party organ were published "intentionally and maliciously" to damage and destroy Felda's local and global reputation.

Written apology

Apart from RM200 million in damages, Felda is also seeking an injunction against the respondents from repeating the allegations and also a public written apology that will be published in newspapers and magazines.

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Last month, Felda threatened to sue Suara Keadilan after the publication ran a front-page story with the headline 'Felda Bankrap' (Felda bankrupt) in its June 23-29 issue.

The Home Ministry has since then refused to renew Suara Keadilan's publishing permit, until it gets a "satisfactory" explanation from the publication over its Felda articles.

Hafarizam meanwhile brushed aside the claim by human rights lawyer N Surendran that Felda cannot sue Suara Keadilan for defamation.

Hafarizam pointed out that Surendran was referring to the law as practised by the United Kingdom and not in Malaysia.

"In Malaysia, we only used UK law up to April 7, 1956. After that it is Malaysian law," he said after filing Felda's suit at the Duta court complex.

"I suggest that Surendran, please study Malaysian law. You can do it at UM or any local institution nearby."

On Saturday, Surendran claimed that common law as practised in local, state and federal governments and statutory bodies cannot sue the public.

"If it (suits against the public) were allowed, then the right of the people to criticise the government, government institutions and statutory bodies would be affected," he said.

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