

Take your tiff on Felda to Galas, bickering MPs told
Malaysiakini.com
October 19, 2010

Several bickering members of parliament irked speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia, who told them to take their spat to the upcoming Galas by-election on Nov 4.

The heated exchanges ensued after Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Maslan defended the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) against criticisms of inefficiency.

During the question-and-answer session this morning, PKR Teluk Kemang MP Kamarul Baharin Abbas (*right*) asked the deputy minister on the action taken against the lawyer who failed to turn up in court, resulting in Felda losing its case.

Kamarul was referring to the suit by 354 Felda Kemahang 3 settlers who sued the agency in 2002 for manipulating palm oil grading.

On Aug 26, the Federal Court dismissed Felda's application to review the apex court's decision on Jan 19 denying Felda leave to appeal against the Kota Bharu High Court's decision ordering the agency to pay damages and interest to the Felda Kemahang 3 settlers.

On Jan 13, 2008, the Kota Bharu High Court ordered the agency to pay RM7.8 million plus interest to the settlers after its counsel failed to turn up for the hearing of the suit, and decided in their favour after accepting the evidence of three witnesses.

Ahmad (*left*) responded that a show-cause letter has been sent to the legal firm to explain the absence of the lawyer.

"From what we know the lawyer resigned for personal reasons just before the case was scheduled to be heard in court," he explained.

Later, Felda's appeal against the court ruling at the Federal Court was also denied. However, Ahmad argued that it was not a failure for Felda.

He insisted that the judgment which required the settlers to abide by guidelines set by Felda proved that the agency was not to be blamed completely.

At this juncture, an argument broke out in the Dewan Rakyat, with PAS Pokok Sena MP Mahfuz Omar demanding to know why another lawyer was not appointed to defend Felda.

Interjecting during Ahmad's speech, Mahfuz (*right*) said the former should just admit the truth and accept that they lost.

"If Felda lost, we would have had appealed against the ruling but Felda didn't appeal because the court ruling urged that the settlers abide by Felda's guideline in order to receive the payment to replant the oil palm trees," defended Ahmad.

However, Mahfuz continued relentlessly to ridicule the deputy minister regarding the lawyer's absence, and Pandikar interjected, telling them to take their tiff to the campaign during the Galas by-election.

"Yang Berhormat (referring to Mahfuz), your antics are actually what is embarrassing. Felda didn't lose the Sg Koyan case. We want to advise the settlers who were incited," said Ahmad.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/145788>