

Sedition reports: Defiant Karpal says PM seeks to divert attention
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DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh warned Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his deputy Najib Abdul Razak of legal action should the pair continue to make 'defamatory remarks' against him.
MCPX

"The prime minister should have taken legal advice from attorney-general Abdul Gani Patail before publicly attacking me for questioning the prerogative of Sultan Raja Azlan Shah as the head of religion in Perak, when I did not do so.

karpal singh pc on perak sultan 090508 01"I warn the prime minister that I will not hesitate to take legal action against him and his deputy if they persist in making defamatory remarks against me," he told a press conference at his legal office in Kuala Lumpur today.

The Bukit Gelugor MP also stated his refusal to backtrack over his position on the sultan's order for the reinstatement of the state's Islamic Department director Jamry Sury.

Sultan Azlan Shah gave instructions for Jamry to be reinstated after the latter was transferred to another department following what was alleged to be his refusal to cooperate with the new Pakatan Rakyat state government.

In response to the sultan's orders, Karpal said early this month that Azlan Shah had acted beyond his powers as under the country's law, the Pakatan-led state government had every right to transfer Jamry as he is a government servant.

'I'll not be intimidated'

Commenting on this yesterday, Abdullah claimed that what Karpal said was seditious, insulting to the sultan and tantamount to questioning his prerogative and knowledge of his scope of duties as the state's head of religion.

Najib, on the other hand, described Karpal's statement as incorrect as the federal and state constitutions legally allow the sultan to act as he did.

Several police reports were also made yesterday by Barisan Nasional MPs and a Malay NGOs coalition, who accused Karpal of being seditious, rude and having insulted the institution of Malay rulers.

karpal singh pc on perak sultan 090508 02However, Karpal said he would not be intimidated by anyone, including Abdullah, and would sue for defamation over the allegation that he questioned the prerogative of the sultan as head of the religion in Perak.

"If his intention is to scare me, the prime minister is sadly mistaken. I will take him on if he persists in taking the line he's taking now," he said.

As for the others who filed police reports, Karpal said he cannot see how his "statement over the transfer of Jamry impinged on the sultan's prerogative as head of religion in his

state."

"Clearly, I have committed no offence and those lodging reports against me should be prepared to face the consequences of lodging false reports," he added.

The veteran politician, who is also a renowned lawyer, said among the false assertions are that he had questioned the prerogative of the sultan or had insulted him.

"Those would be the (examples of) statements which are false, because they are not backed by documents or otherwise.

"If the police investigate and if the reports are false, then the necessary steps should be taken (to charge them for making false reports)," he added.

Citing a landmark Federal Court ruling in 1981, Karpal reiterated his argument that it was up to the Perak government to decide when and where it wanted to transfer a civil servant under its governance.

Emphasising his point, Karpal said he should be qualified to make such assertions as he had himself gone up to the Privy Council in United Kingdom - which until 1985 was the highest court in Malaysia - to argue the same point.

"I know the law. I did the case. I went right up to London to argue it... If any lawyer has another view, I'm prepared to have a dialogue on this," he said.

Diverting attention

Training his sights on Abdullah, Karpal claimed that the prime minister's comments yesterday was an attempt to divert attention from the crisis within Umno pertaining to his leadership.

"Obviously, the prime minister is turning what is purely a legal issue into a political one with racial undertones. I would have expected the prime minister to be politically mature instead of joining others who are baying for my blood.

"It is equally obvious that the prime minister is trying to divert attention from his own shaky position after calls from numerous Umno divisions that he should step down and the challenge by (former Umno vice-president Tengku) Razaleigh Hamzah to take him on as Umno president in the coming Umno general assembly.

"Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is, without doubt, a lame duck prime minister," he said.

Recounting the charge of treason that BN MPs had leveled against him in Parliament on Thursday after the issue was raised, Karpal said he was adamant on not apologising for his statements even if they were to move to expel him.

"They better don't, because I stand by what I have said. You don't say something and then later back down or apologise.

"I gave it a lot of thought before I made the statements. I went into the law carefully and considered the position," he said.

"I've been in Parliament for 26 years and will not be intimidated by anyone. Why should I?"

"If they do (expel him), I'll take them on. You can't intimidate someone to submit to what you want. I don't run away from challenges like this," he added.

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