

Stop meddling in our affairs, Rais tells US
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Foreign Minister Dr Rais Yatim today called on the United States to stop meddling in Malaysia's internal affairs as the country has its own set of laws.
MCPX

rais yatimHe said Malaysian laws were passed by Parliament and there was no need for other countries to look down on Malaysia over the administration of its laws.

"Our Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code originate from the Common Law.

"Therefore, there is no reason whatsoever, for any power on earth to criticise another country's internal administration of justice," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

He was responding to a statement by former US vice-president Al Gore that the Malaysian government was involved in "character assassination to silence an effective leader of the political opposition".

Rais hoped that Al Gore would stop "goring" at Malaysia and it was about time for him to examine himself, while there were also other important things for leaders to say instead of focusing on Malaysia.

"We've had enough of this criticism, but if they have a substantive legal problem that they would like to highlight internationally, they are welcome to discuss with us but in a manner that is judicious, careful and respectful," he said.

Summoning people too often

Asked whether the ministry would summon the US ambassador to explain, "We have been summoning people too often lately. I think for now, we just let this go.

"As the minister of foreign affairs, I would like to send this message loud and clear - stop meddling in our internal affairs.

"We can say the same thing about Guantanamo, we can say about the Malaysians being detained there, but we did not do that as we have respect for the systems of the world."

In a related development, the Bar Council said US' concerns over the judiciary's ability to ensure Anwar is given a fair trial is not as important as the misgivings of Malaysians towards the law enforcement and adjudication institutions here.

Even Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has accepted the need to wage a "uphill battle" to address the public's doubts, said Council vice-president K Ragunath.

"If you ask the man on the street, not many people have confidence in the enforcement agencies and the judiciary.

"That is the biggest problem we have and I think the prime minister accepts that," he told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur.

"I don't think that we don't accept the decision of the court or the decision to prosecute or whatever. Those are two different issues.

"These are bodies empowered by the Constitution to prosecute, and these are the bodies empowered by the Constitution to adjudicate, so we have to accept that," he added.

"But that does not mean we cannot criticise," said Rangunath, who said transparency and accountability are the most important factors to be taken into consideration.

"I don't think we are concerned about what the US says, or whatever. That is not important. What is important is the perception of the public and the Malaysian people," he added.

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