

PM : They've disrespected sultan's decision

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The move to suspend Perak Menteri Besar Zambry Abdul Kadir and his six executive councillors is tantamount to disrespecting the sultan's decision, said Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today.

"The speaker cannot do it (suspend the seven) - the menteri besar and excos were appointed by the sultan legally. This kind of action can be regarded as not respecting the sultan's decision.

"As elected assemblypersons, they have a right to be in the Dewan (state assembly)," he told a press conference in Putrajaya.

The premier added that the suspension of the seven contravenes the Perak state constitution which gives the sultan discretionary powers to appoint Zambry and the six cabinet members.

Abdullah also urged the Perak BN government to file a police report over the latest twist in the political turmoil which has engulfed the state ever since four defectors forced the ouster of the Pakatan state government.

"We know their (Pakatan Rakyat) tricks," he said, adding that by suspending the seven, Pakatan will have the majority in the state assembly.

"This (the suspension) is a plot. It is a plot with bad intention to oust the BN government in Perak. What they are doing is to try to wreck and stop BN from governing in a fair manner," he added.

Abdullah said the proposal to lodge a police report was mooted at a recent meeting between him and Zambry.

He also said that it was best for Zambry to meet the Perak sultan and briefed him on the crisis.

Fresh polls not the solution

The PM also disagreed with the suggestion that a fresh state election would be the answer to the political impasse.

According to him, the best solution is for the BN state government to continue ruling Perak to ensure stability.

Asked if declaring emergency rule, such as in the case of Kelantan in 1978, would be a possible way to end the political deadlock in Perak, Abdullah brushed aside the idea.

Instead, he stressed that it was still possible to establish a BN government.

Yesterday, the Perak state assembly's committee of special privileges suspended Zambry for 18 months and his excos for 12 months.

In a statement, speaker V Sivakumar said the decision was reached because the seven had failed to provide an explanation for their contempt of the state assembly by declaring themselves menteri besar and excos.

By suspending seven of the BN's 28 state assemblypersons, the numbers have again tilted back to the former Pakatan Rakyat government.

However, DAP stalwart Karpal Singh has argued today that the state assembly should be reconvened to endorse Sivakumar's decision.

The prime minister has also lamented today that the crisis in Perak is affecting the federal government's effort to deal with the global economic slowdown.

"We want to focus on the economy and ensuring that the implementation of the stimulus package introduced by the government is smooth. There must not be any upheavals when we are focusing on this matter," said the prime minister.

Go back to the people

In a related development, the Bar Council said one legal view is that the speaker and the special privileges committee have the powers that they have exercised, another is that the matter referred to the committee must be placed before the state assembly before it can take effect.

However, its chairperson Ambiga Sreenevsan said regardless of whether the speaker or the special privileges committee had followed the correct procedure, their conduct and proceedings may nevertheless be outside the jurisdiction of the courts.

"While we wrestle with these constitutional and legal issues, there is a reality on the ground that we must face," she said in a statement.

"The legal actions are not the first and are unlikely to be the last. This is not desirable and does not provide an effective and definitive solution. Going back to the people will.

"We urge the parties involved to seriously consider doing so, not only in the interest of the people of Perak but also in the interest of stability and the nation as a whole," she added.

Rumours of PM not quitting?

Meanwhile, Abdullah was also quizzed on the rumour that he would not be stepping down as prime minister even after quitting his Umno president post next month at the party's general assembly.

The rumour gained more credence when his predecessor and most ardent critic, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, wrote in his blog that Abdullah and his 'fourth floor' advisers are conspiring for the outgoing PM to stay on.

Abdullah however refused to respond to the issue, telling reporters that he "doesn't want to

talk about" such rumours.

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