

MOVE In Defense Of Aziz Bari

MalaysianMirror.com

November 29, 2011

Lim Kit Siang

The Malaysian Academic Movement (MOVE) today reiterated their concern over the continuing persecution and possible prosecution of Professor Abdul Aziz Bari of the International Islamic University Malaysia.

In a statement to Malaysian Mirror, MOVE urged the parties concerned to stop and revoke all investigations and disciplinary proceedings that aim to intimidate students and academics from addressing their immediate concerns.

Professor Wan Abdul Manan Wan Muda, the chairperson of MOVE said "Professor Abdul Aziz is a highly regarded scholar of Malaysian constitutional law and society. While he has written many scholarly books over the years on Malaysian Constitution, he continues to be persecuted by the police, politicians and his own university (IIUM) for his scholarship. Advocates of public debates and non-violent approaches like Professor Abdul Aziz are silenced by state power and its apparatus."

"Professor Abdul Aziz is becoming the symbol against a long history of academic repression and harsh censorship in Malaysia. Unfortunately, the problem of intellectual freedom and free speech in Malaysia has had a poor record. In 2011, the World Press Freedom Index placed Malaysia in 143th place in a list of 196 countries, whereas Malaysia was in 124th position when the current leadership came to power in 2008. Moreover, constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press, expression and assembly are undermined by other provisions, and in practice they are only partially upheld."

He asserted that Abdul Aziz Bari's prosecution for exercising his right to freedom of expression conflicts with Malaysia's obligations to recognize the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; the right to freedom of expression; and the right to freedom of assembly and freedom of association as delineated by the Constitution of Malaysia.

"Punishing dissenting comments and ideas undermines academic freedom, which is all about the right to free expression and freedom of opinion. The International Islamic University Malaysia should rescind all investigation and disciplinary proceedings against Professor Abdul Aziz Bari."

MOVE believes that institutions of higher learning must uphold and defend the principles of academic freedom, and must also be sanctuaries for the free expression of ideas and opinions.

"This means that universities must also be a haven for controversial speech. We commend our national and international colleagues for your clear and vigorous defense of academic freedom and free speech in this case, and we continue to stand firm in defense of Professor Aziz Bari." the statement concluded.

Copyright © 2011 www.malaysianmirror.com

Source: <http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/6-nation/55740>