

Mong Dagang's Undemocratic Conduct
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I refer to the article published in the March 6th 2012 edition of The Sun Daily that the Assistant Minister of Modernization of Agriculture, Mong Dagang, instructed the Welfare Department to stop the RM300 monthly welfare benefits to a disabled person, Frusis Lebi.

The Assistant Minister also directed the Agriculture Department to stop giving free fertilizer and fruit seedlings to Frusis who was born with deformed fingers and feet. The Assistant Minister said that he directed the welfare benefits and subsidies to be stopped because the disabled person is an opposition supporter.

The actions by the Assistant Minister are a gross abuse of his powers and a violation of Frusis Lebi's constitutional rights to support the political party of his choice.

The Assistant Minister's action to penalize, harass and victimize opposition supporters is a clear example of the dangers to opposition supporters if their identity is disclosed to the Government as proposed by the Prime Minister, Najib Tun Razak, in regulating political funding as announced on 27th February 2012.

The effect of the proposed regulation on political funding is that the identity of the donors will be disclosed to the Government. Although the disclosure of donors to political parties is advocated by political finance experts and international organizations, such disclosure is subject to the important caveat that the election commission, police, prosecution, judiciary and civil servants are independent and impartial. Such regulation for disclosure will only lead to abuse and retribution against opposition supporters in regimes that do not practice and uphold democratic principles.

The conduct of Mong Dagang is undemocratic and an abuse of power. If the Barisan Nasional leadership does not take immediate action to rectify the situation, it will only confirm that the Barisan Nasional regime does not practice and uphold democratic principles. I call on the Prime Minister to remove Mong Dagang from his position and reinstate the welfare benefits and subsidies to Frusis Lebi. The Prime Minister should first implement Bersih's demands for fair and free elections before making proposals to regulate political funding.

The proposed regulation to disclose the identity of donors to political parties without the necessary safeguards to protect the donors will only serve to stifle the opposition and retard democracy.

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