

Are Pakatan Lawyers That Incapable?

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I find it amusing that the Menteri Besar of Selangor Khalid Ibrahim along with his excos find no qualms in splurging thousands of if not hundreds and thousands of Ringgit Malaysia (after conversion of GB£1 = RM4.844) from rate-payers' funds to seek advice from an international London-based legal firm to resolve its stalemate with the federal government on the water industry.

Malaysian advocates & solicitors are qualified

In 2006, when a request was made to the High Court for Cherie Blair, the spouse of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to represent construction company Fawziah Holdings at the Federal Court, the Kuala Lumpur High Court judge Wan Afrah Wan Ibrahim ruled that although Cherie Blair is an eminent Queen's Counsel, she has not satisfied Section 18 of the Legal Profession Act 1976, that is, she has special qualifications or experience of a nature not available amongst advocates and solicitors in Malaysia. At that time, besides the Attorney General, even the Bar Council and the Kuala Lumpur Bar Committee (KLBC) objected to her application.

The ruling by Justice Wan Afrah clearly indicates that Malaysian advocates and solicitors do have the special qualifications, experience and skills needed to represent the Selangor state government. Members of the legal profession residing, practising in Selangor state as well as other Malaysian states would best understand local issues.

A foreign-based legal firm would have to research the matter before giving his legal qualified counsel. All these is time-consuming (besides revving up the scale on legal costs borne by Selangor rate-payers) as the foreign lawyers would need to comprehend and adjust Malaysian norms, customs besides the law and issues surrounding the federal-state water tussle.

Our questioning the Selangor government's dependence on a London law firm for legal counsel is not an argument about battling the legacies of post-colonialism or an East versus West debate.

Our objection is based on the Selangor government discarding the ability of its own state legal team, its own lawmakers elected at both state and federal levels, and other advocates and solicitors who are ordinary members or office bearers in all parties i.e. DAP, PKR and PAS forming the Pakatan coalition.

Do Pakatan lawyers know the law?

This move by the Selangor government is an indictment of the talentless, inadequacies of Pakatan members, party office bearers who are registered with the Malaysian Bar Council advocates and solicitors and legislators who draft Bills, Acts, Enactment, that they become reliant on foreign labour (skills).

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