

Rejection By Parliament On Questions Not Justifiable
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By Teresa Kok

I am disappointed to receive two rejection letters from the Parliament Secretary, at the start of this Dewan Rakyat sitting, on questions I submitted for the current session. These rejections were based on the Parliament Standing Order 23(1)(h) and 23(1)(g) whereby it is claimed that my questions – on the Scorpene scandal and the PKFZ case – were not allowed in Parliament.

This is unacceptable as these questions involve public interest as both the issues have the element of taxpayers' money being abused or unaccounted for.

These questions in summary ask whether:

(1) The PM will make himself available and present to testify at the Scorpene case in the French courts if subpoenaed and will the government now set-up a Select Committee to investigate the purchase of the scorpene submarines which involved commissions paid to Perimekar and Terasai; and

(2) Why the Transport Minister, with regards to the PKFZ case, ordered payment to KDSB without taking the advice of Port Klang Authority (PKA)'s lawyers and how will the Ministry recover the funds from KDSB should PKA win the RM1.6 billion suit against KDSB.

The excuse given by Parliament is that:

- 1) The Scorpene question cannot be addressed because the matter is based on opinion/ assumption as the matter has not arisen in court; and
- 2) The PKFZ question cannot be addressed because it is an on-going court case.

It is, in my view, not a matter of assumptions or prejudicial to a non-existing case nor an on-going case. It is purely a question of whether the government is going to act in the interest of the public in both issues and how are they proposing to investigate and rectify the spending of public funds should there be question marks on it.

As for the question on PKFZ, the question that I asked is not related to the on-going court trial, but it is about whether the Transport Ministry will continue to pay RM733 million to KDSB as it has been advised by the lawyer of PKA not to do so. Besides, this is also stated in a book written by former PKA chairman, Lee Hwa Beng.

I would like to advise the PM and government ministries not to use Standing Orders in the Parliament when posed with questions that concern the general public. By doing so, this will only lead to the public's view that this government has much to hide.

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(The views expressed above belongs to the author in its entirety and does not represent the opinion of Malaysian Mirror in any way)