

DAP wants action over TV1's Pakatan-apostasy link
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 28 — The DAP has demanded the government punish those responsible for airing a report on TV1 allegedly linking a Facebook group promoting apostasy among Muslims to Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders.

During the 8pm prime-time news last night, the state television channel reported the existence of a "Murtads in Malaysia and Singapore" Facebook group, and had linked PR leaders such as Tan Kok Wai, Charles Santiago, Dr Boo Cheng Hau, Ean Yong Hian Wah to the online group. The news report also claimed Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) chairman Dr Nasir Hashim was a supporter of the group.

DAP national publicity secretary Tony Pua (picture) said that the onus was on Minister of Information, Communications and Culture Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim to ensure that those responsible for airing the news would be sacked immediately.

"TV1 was completely unethical in its reporting by not first verifying the above information with the relevant people who were "implicated" by the Facebook page, especially since they were Pakatan Rakyat leaders who were easily accessible.

"TV1 either were too ignorant to know, or did not want to know the fact that the "add to group" function in Facebook is such that you cannot prevent a group administrator from adding you to any group.

There is no requirement to secure one's permission or approval for adding a Facebook member to a Group...Therefore all of the accused "supporters" of the Facebook page did not intend to, or never knew they had "joined" the Group," Pua said in a strongly-worded statement today.

The TV1 news report also quoted right-wing pressure group Coalition of Malaysian NGOs (Gabungan NGO Malaysia) secretary Jurit Ramli as saying that the authorities should take immediate action as the threats of Muslim apostasy in Malaysia is "very real."

Pua stressed that the television station ought to be "charged" for disseminating false news — choosing to emphasise the supposed support shown by PR leaders to the page instead of criticizing the Facebook group's administrators for wantonly adding PR leaders to the page and to cause anger among the Malaysian public.

He charged that pro-government media stations were forming a similar pattern, as the TV1 report comes days after TV3 had "reported" on August 21 attempts made by a tuition centre in Old Klang Road to convert Muslims to Christianity. Complaints were allegedly made by people from "Surau Al-Musyrikin" against the tuition centre, which has since been shut down.

The Petaling Jaya Utara MP accused Barisan Nasional (BN) of causing religious tension as a means to retain power in the upcoming general elections.

"We condemn the actions of the TV stations in the strongest possible terms and demand that the Minister of Information, Communications and Culture Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim

apologise on behalf of the TV stations for making false and seditious news reports.

"Dr Rais must also conduct an immediate investigation into the completely lack of professionalism in both TV1 and TV3 and insist that the responsible parties are removed from the posts," Pua stated.

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