

Pakatan asks if all TV content needs censorship board nod
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 24 — Opposition lawmakers today heaped suspicion on the reason that “Undilah” was pulled off the air and questioned if it is common practice for all such clips to be first vetted by the Film Censorship Board (FCB).

Expressing doubt over the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission’s (MCMC) explanation that “Undilah” has yet to receive the board’s approval, Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua (picture) asked if all content aired on television was subjected to such strict controls.

“I am sure there’s plenty of content that does not need approval from the board first... like news programmes, live telecast, talk shows... not everything requires such approval, so where is the line drawn?” he said when contacted.

The DAP national publicity secretary, who is also featured in the 4.38-minute clip urging Malaysians to vote, agreed with MCA Youth chief Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong’s statement defending the clip this morning, saying it was merely an “innocent music video”.

He said the MCMC, an independent regulatory body that reports to the Information, Communication and Culture Ministry, should instead focus on protecting consumers of telecommunications and multimedia companies such as the recent plan to charge service tax to prepaid mobile users.

“They should not be harping on petty, irrelevant things like simple music videos urging Malaysians to vote,” he said.

PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar went a step further and demanded the commission rescind the ban and instead help to promote the video to Malaysians.

“I urge MCMC to reverse its order and promote the video as a step to strengthen democratic practices in our beloved country,” she said in a statement.

The Lembah Pantai MP, who is also seen in the video, pointed out that the ban had come at a time when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had pledged to increase civil liberties by announcing reforms meant to provide more freedom to Malaysians.

“This PSA (public service announcement), in which I and numerous other Malaysian public figures participated, is a non-partisan rallying call for all Malaysians to stand up, register as voters, and let our voices be heard through the democratic process of voting in elections.

“At a time when those leading the country clamour about making Malaysia the ‘best democracy’ in the world, actions taken by entities like MCMC clearly undermine such efforts and belittle the intelligence of Malaysians,” she said.

On the eve of Malaysia Day, Najib announced reforms to several security and press laws, a move viewed as the latest in the prime minister’s bid to reinvent his image and reach out to

younger Malaysians.

The Malaysian Insider reported yesterday that the "Undilah" clip produced by musician Pete Teo was taken off the air by local broadcasters despite a push for greater democracy because it contains opposition figures and Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah's speech talking about Malaysia having problems.

This portal learnt that MCMC directed local broadcasters this week not to use the PSA just days after its launch on September 16.

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