

'Ambiga not fit to lead Bersih'

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THREAT TO SOCIETY: Her involvement with LGBT disqualifies her

KUALA LUMPUR: DATUK Ambiga Sreenevasan is not fit to lead Bersih because of her alleged involvement in activities related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT), said former Pas deputy president Nasharuddin Mat Isa.

He said that although he supported Bersih's cause to demand for free and fair elections, those who support the notion of homosexuality were a threat to society.

"Based on an edict by (prominent Muslim cleric) Yusof al-Qardhawi, one cannot eat or drink with them, let alone be a follower," said the Bachok member of parliament.

Therefore, he believed that such movement should instead be led by Pas, as it is a main stakeholder in the national political scene.

"The movement should be headed by political parties, not individuals. So, Pas needs to be at the forefront," he said after giving a talk at the anti-LGBT forum at Universiti Teknologi Mara here.

Ambiga, the Bersih chairman, came under fire last year when it was reported that she would officiate a festival organised by Seksualiti Merdeka, a movement championing the freedom for sexual orientation and gender identity since 2008.

The festival, however, was banned by the government following police reports lodged against it.

Nasharuddin said the people should come up with a "counter attack" against such attempts as they bring negative impacts to the society.

The forum themed "LGBT Mengundang Bala Allah" (LGBT vices invite God's wrath) was organised by Pertubuhan Muafakat Sejahtera Masyarakat Malaysia (Muafakat) to discuss how homosexuality could pose a threat to the nation.

Nasharuddin, in his speech, said that there were "prominent and respected" individuals who have thrown their support behind LGBT, which he described as a disease.

"However, we are here to publicly state our stand against homosexuality because we do not want to invite God's wrath," he said, recalling an event where God inflicted disaster to the followers of Prophet Lut for being involved in homosexuality.

Nasharuddin said although Islam champions human rights, these rights come with limits where they should not lead to immoral activities.

Meanwhile, another speaker Mahamad Naser Disa from Federal Territories Islamic Religious Council (MAIWP) law bureau unit said LGBT is not a right, but a civil crime.

He lashed out against the Bar Council for demanding equality for LGBT community and Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for calling for a review to Malaysia's "archaic" law related to homosexuality.

"As Muslims, we are responsible to declare a war against this and not keep our mouths shut."

The speakers also included International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation academic fellow Muhammad Uthman El-Muhammady and Malaysian Muslim Lawyers Association deputy president Abdul Rahim Sinwan.

In an immediate response, Ambiga said Nasharuddin was entitled to his own opinion.

She said Bersih was inspired by the people and it was led by the people.

"Bersih has never been about me, it is about the rakyat.

"Nasharuddin is welcome to his views and I have mine. They have nothing whatsoever to do with Bersih.

"I will be there at Bersih 3 with the people," she said, adding that it was Nasharuddin's choice whether he wished to attend.

Meanwhile, the home ministry said it would allow next week's Bersih rally and similar peaceful gatherings as it would not jeopardise national security.

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