

Kedah's law amendment gives mufti too much power, says MCA rep
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ALOR SETAR: More parties have expressed concern over an amendment to a law in Kedah that makes it impossible to challenge a fatwa in court.

They are also not convinced by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak's assurance that the amended enactment would not affect non-Muslims.

Gurun MCA assemblyman Dr Leong Yong Kong said the party strongly opposed the amendment which was passed at the state assembly sitting on Tuesday.

"This is because they are giving the state mufti or the Fatwa Committee too much power," said Dr Leong who had stood up to oppose the amendment that was passed with a "majority of voices".

The insertion of Section 22A in the Mufti and Fatwa (Kedah Darul Aman) Enactment 2008 provides that a fatwa decided by the mufti or the committee, whether gazetted or not, cannot be challenged, appealed, reviewed, denied or questioned in any civil or Syariah court.

Dr Leong said there has to be a check and balance.

"It might affect the human rights of non-Muslims. I feel this is not democratic," he said yesterday.

Kedah Gerakan chairman Dr Cheah Soon Hai also criticised the amendment, claiming that it enabled the mufti and Fatwa Committee to override any law.

Kedah Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Paduka Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah said the amendment was very unfair because Muslims who were dissatisfied with any fatwa decided by the mufti and Fatwa Committee would not be able to challenge the ruling.

Kedah DAP chairman Lee Guan Aik said the party did not agree to the amendment. He claimed that it made the fatwa supreme.

Lee also said he was unconvinced by Azizan's statement that it applied only to Muslims since the amendment provided that the fatwa could not be challenged in court.

"I feel that the wording in Section 22A is a bit harsh and should have been put in a better way," he added.

Kedah PKR chief Datuk Wan Salleh Wan Isa did not want to comment on the matter.

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