

PKR defends Azmin, accuses Umno of diverting public's attention
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 4 — PKR MPs and division leaders today came to the defence of their deputy president Azmin Ali after newspapers aligned to Barisan Nasional (BN) published what he said are fake photographs of him engaging in sex acts with an unidentified woman.

On Wednesday, Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia published stills of a video taken from several blogs which depict a man resembling Azmin (picture) and an unidentified woman in various compromising positions.

But the PKR leaders stressed today that the photographs, which they said were fake, were proof that Umno was trying to distract the public from the ruling government's "corruption" and "weakness".

"It cannot be a coincidence that the defamation occurred as soon as Bersih 3.0 was over. Bersih depicted the utter failure of Umno, and the government was condemned by the nation, the media and international observers alike," PKR vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng told reporters.

"One begins to malign others when one's status is at the lowest level. That is the case for Umno," he said.

PKR Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar Akin said that the "disgusting" and "dirty" tactic was Umno's attempt to confuse the people and "poison" the minds of the youth.

He said he had received calls from concerned teachers, informing him that primary schoolchildren were raising uncomfortable questions about the photographs.

"This kind of politics does not reflect a first-class nation. It is that of a fourth-class nation, the lowest kind," he said.

The PKR leaders said if the photographs were genuine, they should have been submitted to the authorities rather than published on blogs.

They added that they would not be conducting any internal probe against Azmin, nor press him to provide proof of his innocence.

"The burden of proof lies with the accuser, not the accused. We do not need to conduct any investigations," Telok Kemang MP Datuk Kamarul Bahrin Abas said.

They also said they would not be lodging a police report over the photos.

Yesterday, Azmin said he was suing Utusan Malaysia for RM100 million in damages for publishing what he said were fake photographs of him engaging in various sexual acts with a woman.

He had also issued a letter of demand to Utusan Malaysia (Melayu) Berhad and its editors to withdraw the allegations and to publish a public apology in the Umno-owned newspaper's front page.

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