

Pakatan wants probe on Umno MP over call to 'hang' Ambiga
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers are baying for blood over Datuk Mohamad Aziz's "hang Ambiga" remark uttered in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday, accusing the Umno MP of abusing his parliamentary immunity.

The lawmakers pointed out today that an MP's parliamentary immunity is still limited according to provisions in the Federal Constitution, adding that the Sri Gading MP could still be investigated by the police for his remarks.

At a press conference here, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said he would direct all elected representatives from the party to lodge simultaneous reports against Mohamad for the latter's "samseng-like", "seditious", "racist", "repulsive", "repugnant" and "derogatory" remark against Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan, who is the co-chair of election watchdog Bersih.

"Clearly these remarks are inflammatory, designed to stir disaffection, extremism and racism... it was directed against her because she's a woman, Hindu and Indian," the Bagan MP said.

"This is the first time in history that a lawmaker is demanding for the murder of someone," he added.

Lim noted that although Article 63 of the Federal Constitution grants immunity to a parliamentarian when addressing the august House, there are several exceptions, particularly when the remark uttered has racial undertones or is an attack against the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"And there have also been MPs who have been charged under this constitutional provision.

"The provision does not provide immunity for these areas... such as the laws on sedition and others," he said.

Mohamad had last night called for Ambiga to be hanged for the "treasonous" act of organising the April 28 Bersih rally for free and fair elections, which the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) has claimed was an attempt to topple the Najib administration.

The Sri Gading MP had compared the Bersih chief to leaders of the Al-Ma'unah militants who tried to overthrow the government in 2000 and were eventually sentenced to death by hanging for "waging war against the King," the first people to be convicted of the offence.

"Shouldn't we also hang Ambiga for treason towards the Agong? Traitors should be punished as harshly as possible," the four-term federal lawmaker told Parliament when debating the supplementary supply bill.

PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar said PKR would likely follow suit and lodge reports against Mohamad for his remarks.

"Certainly, in a way, it is an abuse of immunity. We need and use that immunity to expose scandals and documents but when you use it to vilify, attack and disparage other

individuals, then of course it is uncalled for," she said.

"Action must be taken against him (Mohamad)," she said.

DAP deputy chairman M. Kulasegaran, who this morning attempted to raise the issue in Parliament, said Mohamad should immediately withdraw his remark and issue an apology.

He said that instead of a "treasonous act", Ambiga had gone on a "selfless crusade" when she led tens of thousands to march in the streets of the capital for free and fair elections. "She was not alone in this," he pointed out.

"There was also Pak Samad."

"Pak Samad" is the nickname used for Datuk A. Samad Said, the Malay literary icon who co-chairs Bersih 2.0 with Ambiga.

Dr Tan Seng Giaw, who is also DAP national deputy chairman, said if Ambiga had committed any crime, she should be tried in court instead of being attacked endlessly.

"If you are not happy, point out what she did wrong and say it's not acceptable. Why choose emotive and unacceptable words?" he asked.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has also accused Bersih of an attempted coup and Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein has said there were elements in the rally which wanted to instigate death and bloodshed.

The government has set up a panel to investigate the April 28 violence, but the choice of former police chief Tun Hanif Omar as panel chief has been widely criticised after he compared the movement to communism and accused the organisers of trying to overthrow the government.

The April 28 rally that saw tens of thousands gather at six different locations before heading to Dataran Merdeka was peaceful until about 2.30pm when Ambiga asked the crowd to disperse.

But her announcement was not heard by most of the crowd who persisted to linger around the historic square which the court had already barred to the public over the weekend.

Just before 3pm, some protestors breached the barricade surrounding the landmark, leading police to disperse the crowd with tear gas and water cannons.

Police then continued to pursue rally-goers down several streets amid chaotic scenes which saw violence from both sides over the next four hours.

Several dozen demonstrators have claimed that they were assaulted by groups of over 10 policemen at a time and visual evidence appears to back their claim but police also point to violence from rally-goers who attacked a police car.

The Al-Ma'unah group had audaciously stolen weapons from an army camp in July 2000 before finally being cornered and forced to surrender in Sauk, Perak.

Mohamed Amin Mohamed Razali, who led the band of 29 men, was hanged six years later, followed by three other leaders of the terrorist group.

Prior to an earlier Bersih rally held on July 9 last year, a group of Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) activists were also arrested on suspicion of planning to wage war on the King.

The move gained widespread condemnation and the last batch of six PSM leaders were only freed from detention after 28 days before being charged for subversion just days later.

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