

DAP files police report over Utusan's 'haram' claims
Malaysian Insider
August 09, 2012
By Leanza Chia

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 9 — The DAP filed a police complaint today against Umno-owned Malay paper Utusan Malaysia over its reports alleging the secular party is filled with “kafir harbi” or belligerent infidels that has rejected the Federal Constitution and that Muslims are forbidden from supporting it.

Zairil Khir Johari, political secretary to Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, lashed out at the Malay broadsheet for continuing to stoke racial and religious conflict among multicultural Malaysia's many religious groups and races by publishing unsubstantiated claims that DAP is a “haram (forbidden)” party for Muslims.

“Utusan's report implies that DAP is a party of ‘kafir harbi’, making it an enemy that wants to fight Islam. This is a very dangerous accusation and clearly made with the intent to incite racial and religious sentiments,” Zairil (picture) said in a media statement today.

He was responding to the paper's front-page report yesterday headlined “Haram sokong DAP” (Forbidden to support DAP), citing an Islamic religious scholar, Abdullah Sa'amah, who added that it was acceptable to support the MCA and MIC — Umno's political partners in the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition — as the two parties recognised Islam's pre-eminence.

Zairil filed a complaint this morning at the district police headquarters in Jalan Pattani, George Town, saying it was needed “to avoid any further confusion and threat that may occur from these false accusations”.

He said the DAP was a lawful political party with multiracial members who shared a common aim with its Pakatan Rakyat (PR) partners PAS and PKR that stood for justice, transparency, truth equality and democracy.

He challenged Utusan to furnish proof that the DAP was “haram”.

“What is the basis for such claims, seeing as DAP has never made an enemy of any religion?” Zairil asked.

“Therefore, such accusations are baseless and have seditious elements,” he said.

He asserted that in the DAP's 46-year history, it had never once been banned or dismissed as an official party, and that it has always championed Islam as the federal religion while honouring the right for citizens to practise other religions as stated in the Constitution.

He also said the Umno-owned newspaper has been twice found guilty in court of publishing false accusations towards the Penang chief minister, adding he hoped Malaysians will not be easily swayed by the paper's allegations.

The religion's right-wing faction, including within Umno, the ruling BN's main party, has made its presence more pronounced in recent years with several Umno politicians in its Johor stronghold proposing hudud be enforced in the southern state.

To date, only Kelantan and Terengganu had passed hudud as laws but have not been enforced as they run counter to the Federal Constitution.

A recent survey by independent pollster Merdeka Center has shown that Malay voters' satisfaction with BN dropped from 65 per cent in May to 58 per cent in June.

The approval ratings for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also BN president, among the Malay community had dipped from 79 per cent to 75 per cent in the same period.

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