

MCA Not Contesting Bukit Gelugor By-election

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GEORGE TOWN, May 10 (Bernama) -- MCA has decided not to contest the Bukit Gelugor parliamentary by-election on May 25 as it wants to focus on the hudud law issue. Its secretary-general Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan said the decision was made at a Presidential Council emergency meeting in Ipoh, Perak, Saturday. He said the party wanted to address the constitutional crisis which has been sparked by PAS' attempt to implement the hudud law. "MCA needs to focus fully on ways to defend the Constitution," he told a press conference at the state MCA head quarters here. He urged the public and party supporters to understand that MCA needed to make an appropriate decision to handle the current critical situation. Also present were state MCA chairman Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun and other leaders. The Bukit Gelugor parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of its incumbent Karpal Singh in a road accident on April 17. In the 13th General Election last year, the late Karpal Singh defeated MCA candidate Teh Beng Yeam of Barisan Nasional (BN) by a majority of 42,706 votes.

Ong said BN chairman Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had accepted the party's decision after a discussion with its top leaders.

Queried as to whether the grass roots level had backed the decision, Ong said there were many views on the matter but most members wanted MCA to strengthen its position and also prepare for the next general election.

He added that although MCA was not contesting the seat it would continue to serve the people, especially in Bukit Gelugor, to ensure their issues were addressed. Meanwhile, Chew said the Penang MCA Liaison Committee was of the opinion that the enforcement of the hudud law by PAS would spark a constitutional crisis. She said the state MCA will focus all its energy and efforts to avert such a crisis and also hold more dialogues to maintain the integrity of the Constitution. The Election Commission set May 12 as nomination day, May 21 for early voting and polling on May 25.

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