

I'll only say sorry in state assembly, says DAP's Rayer over 'Umno celaka' remark
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By Hasbullah Awang Chik

Controversial Seri Delima assemblyman R.S.N. Rayer today scoffed at calls for him to apologise following his "Umno celaka" (Umno be damned) remark, saying he would only do so during the Penang state assembly sitting.

The two-term DAP representative insisted that there was no reason for him to publicly retract his remark as he had uttered it in the House.

"This happened in the House, so it ends in the House. If I am to retract it, it has to be done in the House. But now the sitting is over.

"If I do not retract the remark and people are still unhappy, they can have me referred to the Rights and Privileges Committee for disciplinary action to be taken. They should do that," he told The Malaysian Insider today.

The Penang state legislative assembly will sit again in November.

Rayer, who is a lawyer, said the DAP leadership has advised him on how to settle the controversy but declined to elaborate.

Last week, during the Teluk Intan by-election campaign, Umno information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan pressed Rayer to retract the remark, which had angered many Umno members.

Ahmad said if Umno was "celaka", the party would not have been able to fight for independence of the country and would not have become the leading component party in Barisan Nasional.

"Umno has had six presidents but the DAP has only one leader, unchanged until now. The president of Umno is the prime minister of all Malays, Chinese, Indians, Sabahans and Sarawakians.

"If Umno is damned, it will not produce good presidents, who can be the prime minister for all Malaysians. We ask Rayer to apologise and retract his remark," Ahmad reportedly said.

In his response, Rayer stressed that he knew what he was saying when he made the now infamous remark in the House.

"I was sober and I realise the consequences of saying that," he said.

Rayer said his remark was directed at Umno members who brandished a banner in Seberang Jaya on January 18 that read, "Because of DAP's leaders mouth, May 13, 1969 happened... Want some more?"

Rayer had earlier hit out at several local Umno leaders at the rally, including Kepala Batas MP Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Tasek Gelugor MP Shabudin Yahya and Penang Umno liaison committee deputy chairman Datuk Musa Sheikh Fadzir.

Rayer had since clarified that when he made the remark, he was referring to the three leaders, and not the entire party or the Malays.

"When they pressed me for a retraction, I refused because I have solid proof that the three Umno leaders were involved in the demonstration, blaming the DAP for the May 13 racial riots.

"I am not a crazy man to say Umno is damned. If I talk without proof, then surely people will think I am insane. But when I talk, I have proof from the newspapers and webpages."

He took a dig at Umno, saying that if Umno were sincere about propogating harmony among Malaysians, it must take action against the trio.

On his remark which triggered a protest by Umno Youth members inside the state assembly hall on May 21, Rayer said he does not blame them, as they got inaccurate information from the mainstream media and had misunderstood his remark, which he said was only aimed at the three leaders.

"Maybe they only saw the report on a certain television channel. I do not blame them," he added.

A group of Federal Territory Umno Youth members had also staged a noisy protest in front of the DAP headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on May 22, where threats were issued to burn down the building.

The action was played down by party leaders, with Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin saying it was a "natural reaction".

"It is the nature of Umno Youth members not to sit and stay quiet when the party is challenged. They always have high spirits to defend the party's honour," Muhyiddin said on the incident. – June 2, 2014.

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