

**Johor crown prince can voice opinion, says lawyer**  
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**By Ram Anand**

Johor Crown Prince Tunku Ismail Sultan Ibrahim can speak up and voice his opinions, even if he seems to be wading into politics, as he is not a sitting ruler, said civil liberties lawyer Syahredzan Johan.

Syahredzan said that he agreed "in principle" with Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Abdul Aziz who said that the monarch should not dabble in politics, but added this did not apply to the crown prince.

"In principle, I do agree with what Nazri said, when there is a sitting ruler, he should not be making political statements," he said after a forum on Prevention of Terrorism Act and Sedition Act amendments in Kuala Lumpur last night.

"But I think in this case, the crown prince does have that right to speak out about things he feels strongly about because he is not the ruler."

He said even in the United Kingdom, the principle that a ruler must be above politics applied to the ruler alone and not members of the royal family.

Speaking at the same forum, former Bar Council president Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan said the government must be ready to accept criticism from the monarchy as it had encouraged them to support the government openly.

"Strictly speaking in a Westminster model of government, the monarchy does not comment on politics," she said.

"But here the government has encouraged the royalty in some cases to support them openly. If they have accepted that, then they must also be prepared for criticism," she added.

Nazri and the crown prince have been in a verbal spat in the past few days, criticising each other following the former's statement that he would "whack" the crown prince if the latter continued making political statements.

Nazri is being investigated under the Penal Code for his remark.

The crown prince had made statements critical about Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), before Nazri waded in. – June 17, 2015.

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