

BN, PAS IGNORING MALAY RULERS OVER ACT 355? AMANAH MP ASKS

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By MT Webmaster

(MMO) Parti Amanah Negara's Datuk Raja Kamarul Bahrin Shah questioned today if Barisan Nasional (BN) together with PAS has intentionally circumvented the Federal Constitution and the Malay rulers over a Bill to expand Shariah court powers.

The Kuala Terengganu MP expressed shock over minister Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom's reported remarks, claiming the Bill was brought forward as a private member's Bill by PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang so that it would not require consent from the Conference of Rulers.

"Does Jamil Khir understand that his remark is an admission that the federal government has conspired with PAS to deliberately ignore the Constitution and the Malay rulers?"

"Isn't this a rude act towards the institution of the Malay rulers?" Raja Bahrin asked in a statement.

Hadi is tabling a Bill seeking to amend the Shariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965, also known as Act 355.

News portal Malaysiakini reported Jamil Khir as saying that a private member's Bill only required one state or one person to table it, unlike a government Bill that would require consensus from 14 states before it can be brought to the Cabinet, to the National Islamic Council and then to the Conference of Rulers.

Raja Bahrin said this would be the second time in a year that the BN government purportedly went against the royal institution after the National Security Council (NSC) Act was passed earlier this year, allowing the prime minister instead of the Agong to declare localised emergencies.

“Are Act 355 and the NSC a sign that the government is headed towards acquiring absolute power by ignoring the voice and the role of the Malay rulers?” said Raja Bahrin.

Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak announced at the Umno general assembly earlier this month that the federal government would take over Hadi’s Bill.

Hadi’s Bill now proposes to increase Shariah punishment caps to a maximum 30 years’ imprisonment, RM100,000 fine and 100 lashes of the cane. It previously sought to remove all limits to Shariah punishments save for the death penalty.

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