

**Speaker gets it right, left and centre for halting Hadi's bill debate**  
**Free Malaysia Today**  
**April 7, 2017**

**Pakatan Harapan politicians flay Dewan Rakyat speaker Pandikar Amin for preventing debate on the bill, accusing him of following directives from the BN government.**

PETALING JAYA: Pakatan Harapan leaders today continued to berate Dewan Rakyat speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia for preventing the debate on a bill to widen the shariah courts' powers.

In a statement, Amanah deputy president Salahuddin Ayub asked where else the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965, better known as Act 355, could be debated if not at the Dewan Rakyat.

"It doesn't matter whether the issue revolves around a protected animal or religion, but ample time must be given, and the speaker must exercise fairness and wisdom in managing the House."

Yesterday, pandemonium erupted in the Dewan Rakyat when Pandikar abruptly called a halt to the debate on PAS' bill to amend Act 355.

"If you have power, you are powerful; if you don't use your power, you are a bloody fool.

"Today, I don't want to be a bloody fool," Pandikar was reported as saying, before announcing a stop to the debate.

This followed a one-and-a-half hour speech by Takiyuddin Hassan, in which the PAS secretary-general explained his reasons for tabling the bill.

In his statement, Salahuddin said yesterday's events proved that the Act 355 issue was just a spectacle.

He added that the fiasco only served to insult the bill, which was pushing to elevate the status of the shariah court.

"I'm sorry Mr Speaker, but you were directed to use your powers to stop the debate. You were told to exercise your powers without using any consideration, and this makes you a 'bloody fool'."

Salahuddin's colleague, Khalid Samad, added that MPs were not allowed to debate the Act even though it was of grave importance to Islam.

“What kind of Islam is this? Islam advocates debates and different views,” the Amanah communications director said in a separate statement.

He also said the decision to halt the debate showed that the Barisan Nasional was afraid, as the ruling coalition knew it would not be able to argue its case.

Yesterday, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng had said the current parliamentary sitting had been used for a “political game”.

“The sitting should not be politicised like this. Bringing up a private member’s bill and then deferring debates while there is still time, this has never happened before in Parliament history,” he said.

PKR’s Pandan MP Rafizi Ramli said he had lost respect for Pandikar “for allowing this House to be used for a sandiwara (drama)”.

The DAP’s Puchong MP Gobind Singh Deo said Parliament’s credibility had been “affected” by what had transpired.

At the Dewan Rakyat yesterday, there were loud protests from opposition lawmakers when Pandikar called off the debate on the bill.

The bill was first tabled last year by PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang. It seeks to increase shariah punishment to a maximum 30 years’ jail, RM100,000 fine, and 100 strokes of the cane.

Penalties handed out by the shariah courts are currently capped at three years’ prison term, RM5,000 fine, and six strokes of the cane.

**Copyright (C) 2009-2016 MToday News Sdn. Bhd. All Rights Reserved.**

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/04/07/speaker-gets-it-right-left-and-centre-for-halting-hadis-bill-debate/>