

## **DAP wants BN to apologise to Sarawakians over Pujut affair**

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**By Nawar Firdaws**

**Segambut MP Lim Lip Eng says an apology is due for resources wasted after the High Court overturned the state assembly's move to disqualify Ting Tiong Choon as assemblyman.**

KUALA LUMPUR: The DAP wants Barisan Nasional (BN) to apologise to Sarawakians for the move in the state assembly to disqualify its member Dr Ting Tiong Choon as Pujut assemblyman, only to see him reinstated by the Kuching High Court today.

Its Segambut MP Lim Lip Eng said resources had been wasted due to the “undemocratic” actions of the state’s BN reps who brought a motion to disqualify Ting on May 12 and of speaker Amar Mohammad Asfia Awang Nassar in allowing it.

He said because of this, BN now owes the people of Sarawak an apology.

“Who’s going to pay for the RM100,000 that has been awarded to DAP (by the court)?” he said, adding that if the state assembly incurs the cost it would mean that it would be paid using Sarawak taxpayers’ money.

“And what about the wasted time, court resources and legal fees? Who will bear all these costs? The Sarawak taxpayers!” he told FMT.

“So I demand that the state BN apologises to all Sarawakians, not just the Pujut voters,” he added.

Ting was dismissed as an elected representative under Article 17(1)(g) of the state constitution for voluntarily acquiring citizenship outside Malaysia in the past.

The motion, tabled by Sarawak second finance minister Wong Soon Koh, was put to a vote and received the support of 70 BN lawmakers. All 10 opposition members voted against it.

Wong had said that Ting acquired Australian citizenship on Jan 20, 2010, and only renounced it on April 4, 2016, a month before the Sarawak election on May 8 that year.

According to Sarawak DAP secretary Alan Ling, the Kuching High Court in its ruling said the constitution clearly provides that if any party is dissatisfied with election results, they must take the case up with an election petition.

Ling also said that the state assembly has no express powers to deal with election results, and is not a competent body to decide on constitutional issues.

Meanwhile, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said that if the court had decided in favour of Ting's disqualification, other opposition seats could be declared vacant at any time in states where BN holds majority of the seats.

This would be an abuse of power accorded to the BN, he said in Penang today.

Lim also said Sarawak BN's move had tarnished the image of the state's former chief minister, the late Adenan Satem, who had led a landslide win for BN in last year's state election.

"This (the court's decision) is a hard slap to BN, and something that has tarnished the image of the late chief minister.

"He (Adenan) won more seats for BN, but his legacy was tarnished by efforts to kill democracy by removing an opposition state assemblyperson illegally," Lim said.

DAP vice-chairperson Teresa Kok said the party was "overjoyed" with the decision that it did not mind that flight tickets had already been bought for members to attend the nominations for the Pujut by-election scheduled for June 20 and which has now been called off.

Election Commission (EC) chairman Mohd Hashim Abdullah today said the agency will abide by the court's decision to reinstate Ting.

He said with the High Court declaring that there was no vacancy for the Pujut state seat, Ting's position in the assembly remained as status quo.

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