

'In pursuant of Malaysia Agreement 1963' phrase not needed in Amendment Bill - Liew

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PUTRAJAYA, April 12 (Bernama) -- The phrase 'in pursuant of Malaysia Agreement 1963', proposed by the Parti Gabungan Sarawak (GPS), need not be included in the Federal Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2019 to restore Sabah and Sarawak's status as equal partners to the Peninsular as it was clearly stated in the explanatory notes to the amendment Bill.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Liew Vui Keong said in the explanatory notes, it was clear that the Bill seeks to substitute Clause 2 of Article 1(2) of the Federal Constitution to specify all the constituent States of the Federation by restoring, with modifications, the position of the Clause during the formation of Malaysia in 1963.

The explanatory notes also stated that the amendment was made in line with the spirit of the Malaysia Agreement concluded in 1963 and satisfied the aspirations and hope of the Sabah and Sarawak state governments, as well as all people of the two states, he said.

The GPS' demand to have the phrase 'in pursuant of Malaysia Agreement 1963' be included in the amendment Bill as stated in their letter dated April 8 has caused the Bill to fail from getting the majority votes for it to be passed by the Dewan Rakyat on April 9.

"By abstaining from voting on the amendment Bill, the GPS is denying the rights of the people of Sabah and Sarawak who have been waiting 43 years for this," he told a media conference here today.

Liew said the GPS's excuse to abstain from voting by saying that explanatory notes were not part of the constitutional amendment Bill, was unreasonable.

“The explanatory notes, if you look at the Constitution, it is there and it is legally binding. Most importantly, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in tabling the second reading of the Bill, had made it clear that Malaysia is made up in pursuant to the 1963 Malaysia Agreement. It is clearly stated.

“We also stated in the explanatory notes, which is good enough because whoever wants to look into Article 1(2) for the purpose of research or arguments, they can look into the hansard (of the Dewan Rakyat),” Liew stressed.



Liew Vui Keong

Last Tuesday, the Pakatan Harapan (PH) government’s effort to amend the Federal Constitution to restore Sabah and Sarawak’s original status as enshrined in the agreement to form Malaysia in 1963 failed as it did not get through the bloc voting which resulted in 138 MPs supporting the amendment, none rejecting and 59 abstaining.

Liew said of the 59 MPs who abstained from voting, 19 were from GPS and the remaining were from Barisan Nasional and PAS.

He said a total of 16 MPs did not attend the voting process, including four from PH, namely Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik (Simpang Renggam), Deputy Primary Industry Minister Datuk Seri Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin (Hang Tuah Jaya), Noor Amin Ahmad (Kangar) and Muslimin Yahya (Sungai Besar).

Asked whether action would be taken against the four PH parliamentarians, Liew said it was up to the government's chief whip even though two of them had applied to attend meetings overseas.

"In principle, when Prime Minister (Dr Mahathir) issued a directive to all MPs that they were not allowed to leave the country on April 9, it must be adhered to," he said.

Also absent from the Dewan Rakyat sitting last Tuesday were Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak (Pekan), Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Bagan Datuk), Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang (Marang) and Yamani Hafez Musa (Sipitang).

Eight MPs did not participate in the bloc voting, including Datuk Seri Hishamuddin Tun Hussein (Sembrong), Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (Gua Musang) and Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor (Putrajaya).

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