

JAG QUESTIONS NAJIB'S SILENCE ON 'HANG AMBIGA' ISSUE, 2 JUL 2012

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) has questioned Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's deafening silence over Sri Gading MP's Mohamad Aziz's attacks on Bersih 2.0 co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan, asking whether he condones the MP's action.

In a statement today, JAG said although Mohamad has since retracted his remark and apologised to his BN colleagues in MIC and PPP, he did not apologise to Ambiga.

"Noticeably silent throughout the sustained attack against Ambiga is the PM, forcing us to wonder if he condones such downright uncivilised behaviour," it asked.

"JAG is of the opinion that government leaders should focus their efforts on upholding justice, equality, civil liberty and democracy in Malaysia and not behave in a manner which betrays these principles."

Mohamad's statement in parliament in likening Ambiga to a traitor similar to the Al-Maunah group, who were convicted of waging a war against the Yang di Pertuan Agong, received criticisms leading to Dewan Rakyat deputy speaker Wan Junaidi Jaafar asking the Sri Gading MP to retract it.

JAG, which comprises eight women's non-governmental organisations, said it was alarmed with such attacks on Ambiga, a senior lawyer, and described such a remark coming from a lawmaker as shockingly offensive and violent to the extreme.

"It violates basic standards of decency expected of parliamentarians and shows a deep lack of understanding of the democratic process. A call for clean and fair elections is a democratic right in a democratic country. That attacks on Ambiga are selective in their approach has not gone unnoticed."

"This lack of courtesy is unacceptable and should be condemned by all decent Malaysians," it said.

The Bersih 2.0 secretariat in a statement last night had deplored such comments and questioned whether Najib would take action on Mohamad.

BN and Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor had distanced the coalition and the Malay nationalist party from Mohamad's statement, saying it was the MP's personal opinion and it was not proper for any MP to make such a remark.