



KEMENTERIAN KOMUNIKASI
DAN MULTIMEDIA MALAYSIA

MEDIA STATEMENT

GOVERNMENTS' RIGHT TO SUE CITIZENS SHOULD BE STUDIED

The Ministry of Communications and Multimedia views with concern the decision of the Federal Court on Wednesday (Sept 26, 2018) wherein it held that the government has the right to sue individuals for defamation.

The Federal Court relied on the provisions in the Government Proceedings Act 1956 in arriving at the said decision. It is my view that the government should consider amending the said Act so as to remove or restrict the right of governments to sue its citizens for defamation.

I therefore support the call by YB Hanipa Maidin for a committee to be set up to study the judgement of the Federal Court in detail and to thereafter propose to the Cabinet amendments for that purpose.

I am of the view that the guarantee of free expression extends to the right of citizens to express their views, be it for or against the very government that they elect. In addition to that, I take the view that governments ought to be deemed as public bodies which should be open to criticism. This is the essence of democracy which must allow for governments to be subject to public scrutiny and comment.

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