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No to Suqui demands (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Government could not entertain demands made by Suqui as they were tantamount to abolishing Malay rights, a move which will result in chaos and will paralyse the country's progress.

Stressing that national unity was too valuable to be forsaken, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the Dewan Rakyat that acceding to Suqui's demands would not only lead to racial disunity, but would also be as good as repealing clauses in the Constitution which guaranteed Bumiputera privileges.

Suqui is the acronym for Malaysian Chinese Organisation's Election Appeals Committee which claims to have more than 2,095 associations affiliated to it.

Replying to Kerk Kim Hock (DAP-Kota Melaka), Dr Mahathir reiterated his earlier statement that Suqui's actions were not much different from that of the communists who wanted to abolish the special status of Malays.

Dr Mahathir first made the remark in his National Day message on Aug 30.

The Prime Minister said while his criticism was only directed at Suqui, especially certain leaders of the group, they and in particular Chinese newspapers, made his remarks appear as if they were targeted at the entire Chinese community.

"If the Chinese in general are offended by my remarks which had been deliberately distorted by Suqui and some Chinese newspapers, I apologise to them," he said.

Dr Mahathir added there would be no peace in Malaysia, let alone progress, if the Government were to resort to ignoring its social contract and the Constitution.

This was because Suqui's demands that the Chinese be granted all what they deemed to be as their rights virtually meant removal of Malay privileges which were intended to ensure that Malays, lagging behind in many areas, could catch up.

"As Prime Minister, it is my responsibility to ensure peace and security in the country.

"I know that any attempt to get rid of the rights of the Malays and Bumiputeras will result in chaos and disorder," he said.

Dr Mahathir said although Suqui did not explicitly say so in its 83-point demands, the consequence would be the removal of the divide between Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera.

The Prime Minister said any potential chaos arising from the Suqui's demands was defused because he personally forbade Umno Youth and other Malay groups from resorting to violent protests.

"They were told that I will personally deal with this issue," Dr Mahathir said.

He said instigations by outsiders bent on seeing Malaysia embroiled in anarchy as in some other developing countries especially Muslim nations, had appeared to have an impact among Malays and Malaysian Chinese following the demands by Suqui.

Dr Mahathir said despite him refraining Umno Youth and the other Malay groups from displaying strong protest, Suqui appeared to have decided to proceed with its demands.

"Their disregard for the ban on raising sensitive issues and disrespect for the Government's social contract and national policies are akin to the attitude of communists," he said.

"Their disrespect of the other communities makes them similar to the Al-Ma'unah (armed cult group)."

He added just as with the call for "Malaysian Malaysia", what was demanded were equal rights and meritocracy.

He said meritocracy was in fact used as an excuse for blocking and oppressing native people of their rights by immigrant communities as seen in an immediate neighbouring country and other nations.

"We've seen how natives of the land become marginalised, impoverished and have no role in the Government in the name of so-called equal rights and meritocracy."

Dr Mahathir said Suqei had to be reprimanded for challenging the social contract and attempting to grab all for one community through so-called equal rights and meritocracy which the Malays rejected half a century ago.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians had accepted that no one community could get all that it believed as its rights and that all communities had to sacrifice a little to avoid erosion of the rights of others.

"The Malays willingly diluted their political domination because they wanted to recognise the rights of the non-Malays and accepted the concept of multi-ethnicity," Dr Mahathir said while relating at length how a multi-racial social contract came into existence in the country.

He said Malay leaders with their Chinese and Indian counterparts, representing the MCA and MIC, had agreed that there would be no nationalisation of properties and rejected the socialist system.

"In turn more than one million non-Malay residents were granted citizenship of the Federation of Malaya after they agreed and recognised the Malays as Bumiputeras with special rights," he said.

This social contract enabled the different communities to fight for independence together.

Dr Mahathir said it would require 3,000 per cent growth over 20 years to raise the Bumiputera economic status from one to 30 per cent whereas a 33 per cent growth over 20 years would be enough for non-Bumiputeras to reach the 40 per cent target set by the NEP.

"Therefore, it is not surprising that the Malays and the Bumiputeras achieved only 20 per cent. Even so, government agencies hold 17 per cent of that, leaving the Malays holding only three per cent.

"The non-Bumiputera have already far exceeded the 40 per cent stake as set out in the NEP objective," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if the affirmative action were to cease, the performance of the Malays and Bumiputera would decline further.

"They will revert to being the poorest and marginalised race in their own country.

"There is bound to be tension in their relations with the other communities," he said.

(END)