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Cuepacs: Report one-sided

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The findings of the Independent Committee on Segregation in Schools are based on one-sided investigation, the Congress of Unions in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) said today.

Its secretary-general Abd Rahman Manan said the seven-member committee, headed by Emeritus Prof Datuk Dr K.J. Ratnam, did at no time call on the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) to put forth its claims with proof on the alleged racial segregation in schools.

"The whole investigation is totally one-sided, that is only with the schools which were alleged to be practising racial segregation," he told a Press conference in Wisma Cuepacs.

The NUTP had alleged that 209 national schools nationwide and a district education office practised racial segregation.

Abd Rahman said the committee should have given NUTP, including its secretary-general Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam, a chance to present its case with proof.

"Though the committee has made its findings public, Cuepacs still feels that NUTP should have been given a chance to prove itself," he added.

He said Cuepacs felt relations between NUTP and the Education Ministry had been strained following the committee's findings that there was no segregation in schools.

"NUTP, an affiliate of Cuepacs, represents more than 105,000 teachers in Malaysia. We do not want to see a rift and serious problem arising between the union and the ministry."

He said it must be clearly understood that the racial segregation in schools was brought to the attention of NUTP by parents and Siva Subramaniam brought this matter to the attention of the Ministry and the Government as the secretary-general of the union.

"Siva Subramaniam did not act as an individual or as teacher but as the secretary-general of NUTP and he has the right to voice out the complaints under the Trades Union Act 1959.

"He did it in good faith. Cuepacs does not understand the hue and cry following the investigation. The investigation was just to find out whether the allegation was true or not," he added.

He said Cuepacs office bearers who met today on the issue decided to intervene and act as middlemen to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

"We are going to meet NUTP officials soon on the matter to get a better understanding of the whole issue before meeting Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi," he added.

Cuepacs headed by its deputy president (1) Nordin Abdul Hamid is scheduled to meet NUTP officials before March 31, that is, before the NUTP Exco meeting.

Abd Rahman said Cuepacs also strongly opposed the move by Deputy Education Minister Datuk Abdul Aziz Samsuddin to take disciplinary action against Siva Subramaniam.

He said Cuepacs "will not wash its hands" of the matter because NUTP was its affiliated union and it would take measures to put a stop to all the allegations hurled against Siva Subramaniam.

"We want everyone to stop making statements and threats of police reports.

"I think it's time all parties adhered to what Prime Minister Datuk Seri

Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on the matter," he added.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said it was a misunderstanding which could be resolved amicably.

Abd Rahman said it was better to resolve the matter quickly for the sake of the education system and the teaching profession.

On March 21, the committee concluded that there was no deliberate attempt or hidden agenda to stream pupils according to race in national schools.

It dismissed as "baseless" the allegations by the NUTP that there was deliberate streaming of pupils according to race in about 10 per cent of the 9,052 schools nationwide.

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