

**PAS, Umno-linked NGOs agree on ketuanan Melayu**  
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PAS Youth seems to be sidling closer to Umno-linked NGOs' views on the definition of 'ketuanan Melayu', agreeing that Malay rights should neither be questioned nor politicised.

"Ketuanan Melayu is not about lordship but about being owners or the original inhabitants of the land."

"The special rights of the Malays as defined in Article 153 of the constitution is fair and appropriate. It has been upheld by all races," said PAS Youth vice-chief Ahmad Sabki Yusof at a PAS forum on the issue last night.

The only problem, said the PAS Youth leader, is the policy or implementation of the special rights to help Malays, that he said is problematic in its implementation and should be adapted to current situations.

His statement was greeted enthusiastically by Umno-linked NGOs Federation of Malay Students' Union (GPMS) and Malay Consultative Council (MPM).

"If this is PAS' view on ketuanan Melayu, then we of the GPMS have no worries and no problem to cooperate and work together with PAS on this issue," said GPMS vice-president Ezaruddin Abd Rahman, with one hand placed on Ahmad Sabki's shoulder.

"It is a non-issue, it's appearance is a political tremor, used by politicians for political gain," chimed in MPM secretary-general Hasan Mad, mirroring both Ahmad Sabki and Ezaruddin earlier comments on the topic.

The trio agreed that the problem arose because no one has defined the phrase 'ketuanan Melayu'.

Hasan also stated that because of the vagueness in the meaning of ketuanan Melayu, the issue was being played up by politicians for their political games and muddied by academicians and writers who continue to write their narrow responses to the topic based only on their expertise, and not holistically.

All three agreed that the matter of Malay rights should not be questioned and should be left alone and not be used by anyone for politic polemic.

They believe that while Ketuanan Melayu is non-existent in any documentation, it is in spirit the incarnation of the principles of the special rights of the Malays accorded in the constitution.

**Malays a chosen race?**

On the other side of the equation however is former Perlis Mufti Mohamad Asri Zainul Abidin (below), who believes that instead of imposing silence on the issue, as the trio prefers, the phrase ketuanan Melayu should be discarded altogether.

"I worry that when you use 'Melayu' or the race as motivation, you will lose sight of the real fight, which is for Islam."

"This may even mirror the chosen race philosophy of the Jews," cautioned Mohd Asri.

If there is any 'ketuanan' to be used, said the former Perlis Mufti, it must be ketuanan Islam, albeit not 'supremacy' but the application of the inclusive Islamic justice that is fair to all, said the religious scholar.

"Ketuanan Melayu will not save the Malays, but Ketuanan Islam can," said Mohd Asri.

Both sides spoke during a forum titled 'The Polemic of Malay Supremacy' organised by PAS Youth in Kajang last night.

However, the virtual ideological alliance between PAS with GPMS and MPM may backfire, as the 100-strong crowd last night gave Ahmad Sabki's views a rather lukewarm reception.

Mohd Asri's urging for the return to Islamic principles however received rousing cheers and clapping by the mainly PAS crowd, hinting perhaps at the sentiments of the Islamic party's grassroots on the issue.

"I am rather surprised by the response by PAS on this matter, or perhaps I am still unclear on what is being said (by Ahmad Sabki) on the issue," said the Islamic scholar.

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