

S'pore Malays outraged by Mahathir's comment
Malaysiakini.com
January 20, 2011

Dr Mahathir Mohamad is in the centre of a storm which he stirred up in the Malay community in Singapore with his comments on their position in the republic.

Many readers of the Singapore Berita Harian resented the former Malaysian prime minister saying that the Malays on the island were marginalised and lagged behind the other communities.

The paper has been publishing the response of readers to the comments that it published, and some of the letters expressed real anger.

One reader, Sallim Ahmad, said that it had become Mahathir's theme that "the Singapore Malays are being marginalised until the end of world."

But the Malays here are progressing without subsidies and the position of Islam is protected although it is not the official religion, Sallim said.

Another reader, Kamariah Lim Li Hwa, hoped that Mahathir would "investigate first our condition" before making any statement on Singapore Malays.

"We the Malays of Singapore feel at ease and are grateful that the Singapore rulers execute our trust with transparency," she said.

A letter from Eusope Musawa asserted that Singapore Malays lived in comfort and as equals with the other communities.

"Dr Mahathir should advise Malaysian Malays to learn from Singapore Malays how to progress," Eusope said.

Other readers were far less polite, using insulting phrases to refer to Mahathir.

In defence of Mahathir

But one reader who called himself Walid Jumblatt Abdullah differed from them.

Walid said he was very happy to see Singapore Malays react with such alacrity to refute Mahathir.

"How wonderful it would be if the Malay community (in Singapore) were to react with similar speed to handle such problems as dysfunctional families, moral decay and academic performance that is unsatisfactory and below that of the other races," he said.

He said that Mahathir had his weaknesses but the former Malaysian prime minister whom some readers called "a senile old man" had turned Malaysia into one of the Asian economic tigers.

He is the only Malay leader known throughout the world and is highly respected in the

Islamic world, not least for his championing of such causes as Palestine, Bosnia and Somalia, Walid said.

Walid said that four non-governmental organisations, two of them Christian groups, nominated Mahathir for the Nobel Peace Prize.

"As far as I know, he is the first Malay leader to be nominated for the prize," Walid said.

- Bernama

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/153978>