

Sipaun 'not sorry' for enraging Umno
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Former Sabah state secretary Simon Sipaun remains unbowed by a police report lodged against him yesterday by the state Umno Youth for casting doubts on the Malaysian federation.

"Umno Youth has been quick to lodge a police report against me for no rhyme or reason. I fear nothing at my age," said Sipaun, 73.

"They (Umno Youth) dragged their feet before lodged a police report against one of their members who declared himself the Sultan of Sulu recently."

Sipaun said he did not say any police abuse suhakam pc 050808 simon sipaun thing "untrue" in his closing remarks at the inter-party dialogue organised last weekend by the Borneo Heritage Foundation in Kota Kinabalu.

"What I said was based on my personal experience growing up in Sabah and being able to compare life before 1963 and after Malaysia. I have more or less said the same thing many times before," he said.

The main points he made were that Sabah did not experience racial polarisation; inter-racial relations were excellent; and was no difference between Muslims and non-Muslims to the extent that there were many marriages across religious lines without conversions.

Other points were that the civil service was multiracial and promotions were based on merit and not race and religion; there were no illegal immigrants, cases of backdoor acquisition of citizenships or people being denied citizenship; there was no ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy); or draconian laws like the Internal Security Act and the Emergency Ordinance.

"Life must not be measured in materialistic terms alone," said Sipaun who also drew on his experience as Suhakam vice-chairperson for six years until April last year.

"After all, comparatively, the states in Peninsular Malaysia too were under-developed in 1963 and many of them are still poor."

He blamed the system in Putrajaya for trying to re-cast Sabah in the political mould of Peninsular Malaysia. This, he said, is why Sabahans are more conscious now of their religion and race.

He denied Umno Youth's claim that he is living in the past, saying he does not want the politics of Peninsular Malaysia to continue to invade Sabah "and pit people against one another or make some people feel that they are above others".

Problems due to 'ketuanan Melayu'

He identified ketuanan Melayu in particular as an approach which has no place in Sabah.

"All this is being forced down our throat by Putrajaya. Our history is different from that in Peninsular Malaysia."

He attributed the souring of race relations in Sabah and other attendant problems confronting the civil service and inter-religious marriages as due to ketuanan Melayu.

He also said Sabah would not have been saddled with the problem of illegal immigrants "if not for ketuanan Melayu".

"I still think as I have said before, back in 1963, that it was a big mistake for Sabah to be in Malaysia. This point must be borne in mind if we are to look for a way forward.

"We should have been allowed to taste the fruits of independence as a free nation instead of rushing into Malaysia two weeks after becoming independent on Aug 31, 1957.

"Today, we are still not free and are being dictated to by outsiders. The Sabah BN government never says no to Putrajaya."

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