

**MP: DPM failed in Interlok row, PM must step in**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**March 17, 2011**

Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin can no longer be trusted to handle the 'Interlok' issue as the independent committee he mooted as a solution to the controversy over the book's use in schools has lost its legitimacy, opposition parliamentarians say.

As such, said Klang MP Charles Santiago (right), the long-drawn-out matter should be resolved by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak himself.

"The committee has lost its legitimacy because 100 changes in all were agreed on prior to the meeting with (Muhyiddin yesterday), and these were all thrown out.

"Does (Muhyiddin) agree with the word 'pariah' being used? Does the PM agree? The matter should no longer be entrusted to the deputy premier," Santiago said in the Parliament lobby today.

He added that the committee was formed because the Indian community claimed that the book was offensive, and ignoring the members of the committee who represent the community goes against its *raison d'être*.

"When three representatives of the Indian community leave or quit the committee, it shows that the community most affected by this no longer trusts the committee," said the DAP parliamentarian.

According to Teluk Intan parliamentarian M Manogaran (left), the best solution is to remove the book from the syllabus, especially as the matter affects students who will have to sit for their examinations by November.

"We can use so many other acceptable Malay novels. This one perpetuates racial stereotypes...like on Page 89 where 'Cina panjang' demands that Seman, who is Malay, to move out because he does not pay rental, and Seman waits for him with a parang," he said.

However, added PKR-Subang MP R Sivarasa, Pakatan is not calling for the novel to be banned as the coalition respects the author's freedom of expression.

As such, the coalition is also against the move to amend the book, as it is a fictional work of literature, written by the author from his perspective at the time of writing.

"This is one of those rare occasions where I agree with (Malay rights NGO) Perkasa who have also criticised the move to amend the book. Freedom of expression has to be respected. The public can read it, it's fine but it is unsuitable as a text in school," he said.