

Perkasa Youth chief quits
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Perkasa Youth chief Arman Azha Abu Hanifah has resigned from his position in what appears to be a protest against the Malay pressure group's lack of influence.

Arman (left) said the group lacks "political will" and cannot influence government policies.

"The NGO's struggles will not come to fruition because there is no political will. We can do a lot of things as a NGO but the policies are still being implemented by political parties.

"Perkasa has no plan to be a political party and it never will be," he told a press conference in a Kuala Lumpur restaurant this evening.

Arman was Perkasa's first head of the Youth wing, named Wira (hero), when it was formed in 2008.

He has been among Perkasa's most outspoken leaders and is best remembered for leading a protest against Chinese rapper-songwriter Namewee in Kuala Lumpur last September.

Contacted earlier today, Perkasa president Ibrahim Ali said he was not aware of Arman's decision to quit.

"As far as I know, there is nothing. However, there are some changes in Perkasa's leadership line-up. This is normal," he said.

Ibrahim said the reshuffle would be carried out during the movement's supreme council meeting later this month.

The purpose is to strengthen Perkasa's position as a NGO, said Ibrahim (right), adding that the group will forever remain an NGO.

Ibrahim set up the Malay rights pressure group following the political tsunami in the 12th general election.

Since then, it has made itself a household name, championing Malay rights in a manner that some quarters consider to be abrasive.

However, despite vocal demands for it to register as a political party and contest in the elections, Ibrahim has repeatedly insisted that it will stay "apolitical", something that Arman confirmed today.

Using the phrase "political will" more than 10 times during the press conference, it was clear that Arman believes the Perkasa leadership lacks this by operating merely as a pressure group.

'I may leave Umno'

He also cited the New Economic Model (NEM) as the straw that broke the camel's back for him.

"Despite all our demands, there were still obstacles everywhere. For these kinds of things, we need political will," he said referring to the clash between Perkasa and the government over implementation of the NEM.

The NGO haazlans been dead set against the NEM, which Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said would see "needs-based" affirmative action replacing one that is "race-based".

And despite Perkasa's hue and cry that this would erode Malay and bumiputera rights, the government has gone on to implement it in stages.

While Arman said he has plans to go into politics, he "is still reviewing the different parties" and that he may even leave Umno.

"We're talking about principles. At the moment, both BN and Pakatan (Rakyat) are all just full of rhetoric," he said, but when pressed, he stopped short of registering his disappointment with his party.

He said several parties have approached him to join them, but he would only decide if the party's struggles were similar to his, which was to defend Malay rights.

Saying that Ibrahim is like a father to him, Arman said he bore no personal grudges.

"I am not disappointed. I have no grudges and no regrets. I'm just doing this for myself," he said.

"I am still a lifelong member of Perkasa, and just because I have stepped down, I will not stop voicing my concerns if I feel that the NGO has lost its direction in its struggles."

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