

No action against Ibrahim equals double standards

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Government inaction against Perkasa chief Ibrahim Ali for his inflammatory remarks smacks of double standards, Gerakan Youth chief Lim Si Pin has charged.

Lim, in continuing the debate on the matter, said the issue was not tackled in a proper manner since the Malay daily Utusan Malaysia published an article titled 'Kristian Agama Rasmi?' (Christianity the official religion?) that carried unsubstantiated allegations from two pro-Umno blogs.

Giving Utusan a slap on the wrist is not the way to deal with this issue. There has been precedence, with newspaper licences revoked, editors hauled up for questioning and reporters placed under the ISA (Internal Security Act).

"Utusan is among the oldest newspapers in the country and it printed such a headline... and it doesn't augur well for the prime minister's 1Malaysia concept," he said.

On May 7, Utusan front-paged a report that Christian pastors were hatching a conspiracy to abolish Islam as the religion of the federation and install a Christian prime minister.

Last Saturday, Ibrahim called for a "crusade" against "ungrateful Christians" if they pursued such a plot.

The pastors and the DAP accused of being involved in the "conspiracy" have vociferously denied the news report and have lodged police reports against the Umno-owned daily, as well as the bloggers, who are reportedly being investigated by police.

Voters possess memory of elephants

Referring to the recent uproar provoked by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz discounting Ibrahim's threat of violence against the Christian community as the "norm" nowadays while urging the community to be "mature" about it, Lim said:

Whether we want to deal with it or not, the public has made up its mind. The BN should be aware that politicians may have short memories, but voters have those of an elephant."

Ultimately, he pointed out, the ballot boxes reflect public sentiments.

Lim said it was not inked in the constitution that a Christian or any member of the non-Muslim community is forbidden from helming the country.

"We have always taken Sabah and Sarawak as fixed deposits. Both states are largely made of Christian bumiputera, so, shouldn't we show them some respect?" asked Lim.

"We in the BN have to return the good deeds to our brothers and sisters in Sabah and Sarawak, if they are loyal and worthy members of the BN, they should also stand a chance."

Meanwhile, MIC Youth chief T Mohan said a multi-racial community depended on the state to protect and ensure its security, but when the government acts with indifference when a community leader issues a threat, that is unacceptable.

"There are limits to freedom of speech... it doesn't mean anyone can say anything that may result in racial conflicts," said Mohan.

"Why is Ibrahim so special? Why doesn't the law apply to him? Why the special privilege for him when we

have never tolerated such things before?" Mohan asked.

Community leaders should fight for the rights and betterment of their communities, but threatening to fight another is serious, he said, adding that Ibrahim's comments had gone overboard.

Unity doesn't mean equality

Civil society movement Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) president Zaid Kamaruddin concurred, saying Ibrahim's statement was "uncalled for".

"He said, 'if you want a fight, it's a fight you'll get', when the truth of the matter is yet to be ascertained. I don't think it was necessary," said Zaid.

Zaid said Nazri as de facto law minister should "know better" if one had broken the law and that anyone who implied violence against others warranted investigation at the least.

Selangor Anti-Irregularities Federation (GAPS) camp commandant Wan Indra Putra Ahmad said as grave as Ibrahim's remarks may be, the latter was speaking out in protection of his community.

"Malaysia promotes unity, but here we have a misunderstanding and the non-Malays are demanding equality... including members of the BN," said Wan Indra.

Ibrahim had to say something in defence of his community, he added, although his view may not reflect that of the majority Malays.