

## **Khairy 'whacked' for not supporting Perkasa**

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Although Umno leaders have distanced themselves from Malay rights group Perkasa, an evening with the party's Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin in Penang has revealed that there is more to the issue than meets the eye.

Khairy (left) said many Umno members - like some in PAS and PKR - support Perkasa and its activities, but that he rejects the ultra-Malay group even if this means getting "into a lot of trouble with Umno".

"I get 'whacked' in Umno and (am) asked why I am not supporting Perkasa," he said at the event at Wawasan University last night, organised by the Penang BN Youth wing.

"I (replied): 'Why should I support something that I don't believe in and would cause us (to lose) votes? You must be kidding. (When) you support Perkasa, how many votes will you lose and how many Malay votes (will) you get? How many non-Malay votes (will) you lose?'"

He said he was told that Perkasa should be supported because Malays should be united, but had said: 'There is only so (far that) we can push the other communities against the wall with this rubbish.'

State Gerakan chief Dr Teng Hock Nan chaired the two-hour session, accompanied by Teluk Bahang assemblyperson Dr Hilmi Yahya, senator and MIC liaison chief PK Subbaiyah and state Gerakan Youth chief Oh Tong Keong.

Kazlanhairy fielded more than 10 questions from participants on topics ranging from electoral reform, the brain drain, discriminatory policies and racism that was pointed squarely at Perkasa's aggression towards non-Malays.

In particular, he was asked how he - as Umno Youth chief - would deal with the question of Perkasa and its president Ibrahim Ali.

He maintained that he had been consistent in stating his stance against Perkasa in front of Umno leaders and at the party's annual general assembly, saying this was not the kind of politics that members should promote.

Khairy said there is no place in Umno or elsewhere in Malaysia for the likes of Perkasa, adding that BN component parties like Gerakan, MIC and the People's Progressive Party do not support the NGO.

Without mentioning names, he said "some people (in Umno) give patronage to Perkasa".

"I want to say there are enough people like me in Umno. We do not need Perkasa because, if you are talking about helping the Malay community, Umno is enough without the need to be racist or racial.

"We don't need (something which) antagonises us and upsets other people. You have my word that Umno Youth under me will continue to oppose Perkasa," he said to enthusiastic applause from the crowd of about 100.

He said this is why he had brought along members of the wing to the event.

"I want them to hear it from me or they would say (I oppose Perkasa) because I do not like Ibrahim or the group's patron (former prime minister Dr) Mahathir Mohamad".

## **Clarification on rally**

For all this, he was told that Umno Youth members were seen outside the Utusan Malaysia headquarters in Kuala Lumpur last Friday, when Perkasa organised a rally in support of the daily.

The news organisation had come in for much criticism over its unsubstantiated May 7 report on a plot to 'install' a Christian prime minister and to make Christianity the official religion.

Khairy clarified that Umno Youth members were not part of Perkasa's rally that day, although he conceded that he had given the green light to the wing to proceed there to support the newspaper and hand in a memorandum.

"I said they could support Utusan but they should also tell them that they were wrong. Internally, we have told the newspaper that they were wrong with regard to their front-page report on the Christian state issue," said Khairy.

"When we were there (at the Utusan office) we chanced upon Perkasa blokes, (so) what (were) we supposed to do?"

"I never sanctioned or condoned (it as) an Umno Youth-Perkasa demonstration. I just sent my boys there (to support the newspaper). I never kept in touch with them, and I don't want to keep in touch with them."

When told that rhetoric is not enough to show that the BN has reformed after the 2008 general election, and that his stance against Perkasa is not 'mainstream' in Umno, Khairy insisted that he had done enough to stand up to his party.

He lamented that he has sometimes stood alone when confronted with the nagging issue of Ibrahim's (left) critical remarks, but does not care that no one has come to his assistance.

As head of the wing, he said he feels obliged to state his stand, although this opposes popular thought in the party.

"I am not like a feudal leader, who needs a lot of people around me...In the animal kingdom, those who hunt alone like the lion is king...I say those who need to move around in groups are like monkeys," he added, to much laughter.

Khairy then said he had written a long letter about Perkasa to the premier and Umno president Najib Abdul Razak, after which other party leaders began to speak up as well.

"I've done enough (when it comes to) Perkasa. It's a work in progress. It may not be enough. We have to support the PM, he cannot be flying alone. Like the lion, he must have other small lions around him, too."