

Gov't distances itself from Bersih-Jewish link claim
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The government has distanced itself from an editorial which appeared in the Utusan Malaysia yesterday claiming foreign Jewish groups might try to use an opposition-backed push to reform electoral laws in this Muslim-majority country.

According to the Associated Press, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's office issued a rare statement late last night directed to the foreign media only, stating it was distancing itself from the Malay daily's allegation.

"It did not reflect the views of the government. Regardless of their political views, it is unacceptable for anyone to stir up hatred and suspicion against any religious group in the way we have seen today," the statement said.

Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia had in its editorial yesterday, stated that Malaysians cannot allow anyone, especially the Jews to interfere covertly in Malaysia's business.

"When the drums are pounded hard in the name of human rights, the pro-Jewish people will have their best opportunity to interfere in any Islamic country," the newspaper said.

"We might not realise that the enthusiasm to support actions such as demonstrations will cause us to help foreign groups succeed in their mission of controlling this country," said the Utusan editorial.

Allegation defended

Today, Utusan Malaysia defended its allegation of a Jewish conspiracy when its 'Bisik-bisik' column quoted Awang Selamat, a pseudonym for its editorial writers, said in seeking human rights and democratic practice, there are parties within this country prepared to receive foreign funds.

The main issue, it states, that how can Malaysia prevent them from being paid by foreigners.

Yesterday, Malaysiakini reported that a Bersih 2.0 steering committee member, lawyer Andrew Khoo denied the allegation that the coalition was sponsored by the Jews.

"It's sheer and utter rubbish," said Khoo (right).

"What this points to is a repeated attempt by some quarters of society... to divide the country along racial and religious lines.

Licence to spin

Meanwhile, unaware that the government had distanced itself from the Utusan's claims, DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang questioned the apparent ease and free licence by which Umno-owned daily continued to spew contentious tales and wild claims.

"Either the Utusan spin doctors have the full endorsement and blank cheque from the Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to spin their worst, or the Umno spin doctors are totally out of control and neither of them has the power to control them even when they go on a rampage that is damaging Malaysia's national interests and international image.

"Which is which, Najib and Hishammuddin?" asked Lim (right).

He was commenting on the recent Utusan editorial quoting former police chief Rahim Noor, who alleged the Bersih 2.0 rally could open the door to Jews and Israel to infiltrate Malaysia.

Lim blasted Rahim's revelations as being nothing more than "a very fertile figment of imagination" spun by Utusan into their crafted editorial as the "Jews are coming" scare.

Bersih 2.0 organisers have denied the speculation in the Utusan report.

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