

**Perkasa denies seeking ban on Christian teachers**  
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**by Hazlan Zakaria**

Malays rights NGO Perkasa has denied that it issued a call for Christian teachers to be barred from teaching in public schools.

Asserting this today, Ibrahim Ali accused unnamed quarters of creating stories and spreading them on Perkasa's behalf without the authority to do so.

"I am Perkasa president. We never made this proposal, as was stressed in the policy speech in our recent AGM, we stand for racial harmony," Ibrahim (Independent-Pasir Mas) told the Dewan Rakyat this morning.

"I believe that this is an evil and irresponsible question made by those anonymous persons who create a lot of stories in the new media.

"Or, it was made by individuals as their personal views and (who are) not authorised to issue official statements on Perkasa's behalf," Ibrahim said, intervening as Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong answered a query from Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing (BN-Tuaran).

Bumburing, during question time, had asked for the ministry's stand on the purported call by Perkasa to exclude Christian teachers from serving in government schools.

Ibrahim also demanded to know which newspaper published the news and chided the ministry for not checking with the NGO first when it was asked the question.

'Malay leaders starving for Christian votes'

During a demonstration organised by Perkasa in front of the National Mosque on Aug 19, several protesters held up banners reading Haramkan guru Kristian di sekolah kebangsaan (Ban Christian teachers from national schools) and Guru Kristian melampau. Halau dan jauhkan dia dari murid2 Melayu (Christian teachers going too far. Keep them away from Malay pupils).

During the rally, Perkasa secretary-general Syed Hassan Syed Ali expressed regret over Malay leaders from various parties who were "starving" for Christian votes to the extent of "selling the dignity of Islam".

Given permission by Dewan Rakyat speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia to respond, Bumburing said he had no bad intention in asking the question and had to do so as teachers are worried by the alleged Perkasa statement and had asked him to seek clarification.

"If there are errors in a newspaper report, usually there must be a correction or answers, but there has been none, so the (Christian) teachers are worried. I as MP was asked to find out (from the ministry)."

Bumburing also expressed worry that statements such as those purported to be made by Perkasa, if not dealt with the reprimand he believes is deserved, could lead to such groups becoming bolder in making attacks against Malaysia's racial harmony.

'Ministry does not discriminate'

"We are the catalyst behind the Global Movement of Moderates, is this just our international face? Or are we going to ensure that we implement such (moderate) values in our country as well," he said.

In his answer to the BN parliamentarian's initial question, Wee (left) said the ministry does not discriminate in its appointment of teachers.

"Our appointment of teachers is based on the needed options and available vacancies. We do not make any distinction based on the religious background or political affiliation of the teachers."

Though understanding concerns of possible wrongdoings by teachers, he explained that there were guidelines governing public servants such as teachers to ensure that they do not engage in activities that may provoke sensitivities.

Wee also gave his assurance to the House that the rules would be used to punish those who were guilty of such offences.

However, he added, the ministry respected the freedom of all individuals and NGOs to express their views and would listen to them, though being aware of religious sensitivities, the ministry would always vet such views and stand by its existing set of procedures to ensure harmony was preserved.

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