

'Can Umno ensure PM post for Malays only?'

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by Aidila Razak

Making good his pre-congress promise to focus on attracting Malay voters, PKR Youth chief Shamsul Iskandar Md Akin called for a constitutional amendment to state that only a Malay can be appointed prime minister.

Doing so would ebb Malay anxiety over the race requirement for the post of prime minister of the country, Shamsul said in his policy speech at the PKR Youth congress at the Pulai Spings Resort in Johor this morning.

"The lack of such a constitutional provision allows irresponsible quarters to manipulate Malay anxieties about their future (should a non-Malay be appointed PM).

"This is because of the suspicions they have of those from other ethnic backgrounds. Such manipulation can cause them to feel unsafe and create tensions.

"This way, the Malays will always pin their hopes on these so-called Malay champions, who turn out to be the real enemies," he said.

As such, Shamsul challenged Umno to make the change to the constitution to prove that it is the champion of the Malays.

However, this would not mean that "corrupt, cruel and oppressive" Malays could take up the coveted position.

"Only a just Malay may qualify (and) this is why we are offering that Anwar Ibrahim be the first Reform Prime Minister," he said of the PKR de facto leader.

This, he said, has been agreed upon by all Pakatan Rakyat leaders, including the non-Malay leaders, who should all be congratulated.

'Not a racist'

According to the Youth chief, making the PM's post available only to Malays only "is fair, not just to Malays but to all Malaysians", as "demographics show that it does not make sense for a non-Malay to be the PM".

Shamsul also stressed that this view did not come from a racist standpoint but rather from the view that "everything should be put in the right place".

Citing philosopher and libertarian John Rawls, he said that this was based on the concept of "justice as fairness".

"The fact is, we are all Malaysians. We must find a way to live harmoniously, without ill-feelings for and suspicion of other Malaysians.

"Harmony can only exist if we uphold justice for all, so we must be brave to demand justice for all," he added.

Speaking to reporters later, Shamsul said PKR Youth was "comfortable" with the current provisions under the Federal Constitution.

"We issued this challenge to Umno in order for them to prove that they are really champions of the

Malays," he said.

He, however sidestepped questions on whether PKR Youth would support amendments to the Federal Constitution to limit the prime minister's post to Malays should Pakatan come to power.

"It is a challenge for Umno," he said repeatedly, adding that it was rational to have a Malay premier based on the country's demographics.

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