

Students have right to voice their concerns

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The Malaysian Indians Progressive Association (Mipas) supports the Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM) and the Gerakan Menuntut Kebebasan Akademik (Bebas) call that the government listen to the students's views on the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) amendments issue in line with the "People First" spirit.

We urge the government to accept both bodies' request, and demands that the UUCA be abolished and urge that student involvement in politics fall under the purview of their respective university administrations rather than one common law such as the UUCA.

Last Saturday, Dec 17, both SMM and Bbebas stirred up a controversy when one of its members lowered a flag bearing Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak's image in front of the Umno headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre to protest the Universities and University Colleges Act.

Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah had urged SMM and Bebas to apologise for their act.

Then on Wednesday Dec 21 some 350 undergraduates calling themselves the Aspirasi Undergraduate Leaders Alumni Society (Aspirasi) gathered outside the Higher Education Ministry in Putrajaya to show their support for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, demanding Datuk Saifuddin's resignation as Deputy Higher Education Minister and as Umno Supreme Council member, in response to Saifuddin's action last Saturday.

Mipas would like to know why and what is the need for Saifuddin's resignation? Had there been anything wrong on his part in pledging to defend the rights of all students to voice their views, assemble peacefully and being liberal?

Mipas believes that students have the right to voice out their opinions and concerns and would like to question the double standards being practised as there had been no action during the protest from Jalan Kaki Kelapa to Komtar in Penang when the protestors trampled on, tore up and burnt copies of Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's portrait .

In fact Umno members did not only vent their anger on Lim Guan Eng, Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon's portrait, too, they subjected to the same treatment in September ,2008.

Then on July Datuk Ibrahim Ali launched the Anti Bersih programme at the Kelab Sultan Sulaiman in Kampung Baru by burning images of Bersih 2.0 chairman Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan. In fact more such incidents could be highlighted here.

However Mipas would like to ask why should the university students be afraid of those whom they have elected?

They (the leaders) should work for us. Do not be afraid to criticise our leaders, no matter who they are.

All Malaysian are equal, freedom for all Malaysians should progress democratically. Mipas hopes that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak would listen to the students and people when it comes to deciding on the UUCA issue and then there would a better chance for the BN to regain its two-thirds majority in 13th General Election.

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