

**Apologise for white ang pow, Perkasa told
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Malay-rights group Perkasa has come under pressure to apologise for giving out 'ang pow' in white envelopes at the NGO's first Chinese New Year open house yesterday.

Gerakan, in calling for the apology, said that what Perkasa did was "very insulting" to the Chinese community.

gerakan women forum 080306 mah siew keong "White envelopes are reserved for funerals in Chinese customs," Gerakan vice- president Mah Siew Keong (right) said in a statement today.

"Giving 'ang pow' in white envelopes during Chinese New Year, which is meant to be a prosperous and joyful festival, shows that (Perkasa chief) Ibrahim Ali is greatly insensitive and insincere."

Mah slammed Ibrahim for being ignorant of other cultures and called him a hindrance to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's 1Malaysia initiative.

"Being a member of parliament and (having been) in politics for so many years, Ibrahim is still so ignorant of the culture of other races, which is why he has kept making a lot of statements without thinking," he said.

Perkasa had held the open house in a bid to show that it is not a racist organisation, as detractors have dubbed it.

Perkasa cny event grabbing at angpow More than 300 people, mostly senior citizens, attended the event at the Kelab Sultan Sulaiman in Kuala Lumpur.

However, it backfired when Ibrahim handed out RM10 'ang pow' in white envelopes instead of the traditional red packets.

Perkasa secretary-general Syed Hassan Syed Ali explained today that this was not intentional, as they were unaware that white envelopes are reserved for funerals. However, no apology was made.

'Ignorance is no excuse'

In a related development, MCA Youth secretary-general Chai Kim Sen condemned Perkasa's actions as being "completely ignorant of the sensitivities of the Chinese community," and there should be "zero tolerance" for extremist views on race and religion.

"As a member of parliament, he should act in the people's interests and understand our multicultural society, and the taboos of various cultures.

"In Chinese tradition, white is reserved for funerals whereas red is used for joyous occasions. It is unacceptable to merely profess ignorance as an excuse," Chai said, adding that this is not the first time the NGO had damaged racial relations.

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