

Hindraf: Speak up for Sri Lankan Tamils
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The Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) has called on Pakatan Rakyat leaders to demand support for a UN resolution on Sri Lanka, saying this would clarify its stand on minorities in Malaysia.

It wants Pakatan leaders to urge the government to support a resolution requiring Sri Lanka to carry out its obligations to minority Tamils.

Hindraf national advisor N Ganesan (right), in a letter to Pakatan leaders, said the coalition would be able to "distinguish (itself) from the self-serving and immoral position of Umno" if they step up to the plate.

"If you have a belief in morality in government and if you want to project that to all the people of Malaysia, this is an opportunity for you to do that. Can you or will you rise to this challenge?" he posed in the letter.

The letter was addressed to the "wise leaders" - PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, DAP national advisor Lim Kit Siang and PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang.

The bloody civil war in Sri Lanka, which ended about three years ago, has been described as a "a colossal humanitarian disaster".

The international community is moving a resolution in the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to call on Sri Lanka to adopt recommendations by the Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) to address its war past.

Published last November, a report from the LLRC offers a "glimpse of hope" for those affected by the conflict and sets in motion appropriate steps that could assist in long-term peace and reconciliation.

Ganesan said Malaysia is a member of the 47-member UNHRC that will discuss the matter in the next few days.

Minority rights

Malaysia has already indicated that it will not support the resolution.

"Any country that believes in the fundamental rights of its citizens should be supporting this resolution. Malaysia is choosing not to," noted Ganesan.

"Furthermore, Malaysia has a substantial minority community and it has a moral obligations to its own minorities and actions on matters like this echoes significantly with its minorities.

"This government, by making this choice, is effectively sending out a message to the minority communities in this country that minority rights and interests are of little consequence to it."

Ganesan said the resolution is an initiative to correct wrongdoings of the past in Sri Lanka.

There is an urgent need to create conditions where the Tamil minority can return to a degree of normalcy in their lives without further delay and to resume lives of dignity, self-respect and equal constitutional status on par with the rest of Sri Lanka, he said.

"Otherwise it amounts to no more than another episode of ethnic cleansing. And there is potential for echoing analogies in Malaysia," Ganesan warned.

"The Malaysian government is taking this position because of its projected need for reciprocal support

when it has to face up to the international community for the crimes it is committing against the minorities in the country,” he added.

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