

'Stateless' Indians want PM to end lifelong agony

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Hundreds of stateless Indian Malaysians will rally at Parliament on April 19 in the hope that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak will listen and act on their grievances and finally end their age-old agony.

Many of them have only permanent resident status despite being born and raised in Malaysia their whole lives. And the government has yet to resolve problems surrounding their citizenship.

NONEAs a result, they are denied education and employment opportunities, and do not have the safety net of Social Security Organisation (Socso) or the Employees Provident Fund (EPF), said PKR vice-president N Surendran (left) in a press release today.

He described the government's MyDaftar campaign as "an ineffective and cynical public relations exercise intended to fish for Indian (Malaysian) votes in the coming general election".

They are unable to bear their sufferings any longer and hope that their grievances will be listened to and addressed through their peaceful rally at Parliament, he added.

When contacted, Surendran said he expected a turnout of about 100-200 of these stateless Indians in addition to PKR supporters.

Calling on the prime minister to act urgently in resolving their problems, he said Najib and BN must "apologise" to the community and solve their citizenship woes.

The government's estimate of about 40,000 stateless Indian Malaysians was misleading. The actual figure is believed to number around 300,000, he claimed.

Surendran told Malaysiakini the figure was an estimate based on information from various activists and social scientists.

He said this was proof of the government's longstanding neglect of the Indian community and characterised Najib's oft-repeated call to "walk with him" as insincere and opportunistic.

Najib has of late been using the Tamil term nambikei (trust) in calling for support from Indian Malaysians.

Hindraf responding to Najib's call, has claimed instead that the community's trust has been "smashed" like a tembikai (watermelon).

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