

**MCA lashes out at Gapena for unpatriotic charge**  
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MCA today batted back Federation of National Writers Association's (Gapena) accusation that the party is unpatriotic for conducting its assembly in Mandarin, pointing out that the constitution guarantees freedom of language usage.

"Article 152 reads that 'the national language shall be the Malay language', it also allows 'the use and study of the language of any other community in the Federation.'

NONE"Thus, MCA or any organization has right to decide what language to be used or printed on the AGM banner," said MCA publicity bureau chairman Heng Sei Kie (left) in a statement today.

She also rapped Gapena chief Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar for practising double-standards, as the same criticism was not levelled at PAS whose banners are in the Jawi script.

"It shows Abdul Latif is disrespectful of the Federal Constitution in the attempt to create social unrest and affect national unity. Thus, who is not patriotic?" she asked.

Defining or exploiting patriotism?

Yesterday, Abdul Latiff had said it is disrespectful to have banners printed in foreign languages minus Bahasa Melayu, when he spoke on the national language being relegated.

He said MCA is unpatriotic for conducting its assembly in Mandarin.

According to Heng, most of the MCA's publicity materials are trilingual, and not merely in Mandarin; employing various languages in the annual general meeting or activities to get the messages across.

"It is clear that Abdul Latif is unfamiliar with MCA's activities and operations

"I urge the Gapena chief to adopt a more open outlook, and remove all narrow mindsets in the interpretation of patriotism in order to not to become a laughing stock; making himself and his organisation a target of mockery," she said.

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