

**Naturalised citizenship a must for stateless M'sians**  
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**By Victor WS Tan**

Stateless Malaysians - those without birth certificates or blue MYcards - are not foreigners, so they should not need to apply for citizenship, said PKR.

Saying this after a protest at Klang National Registration Department (NRD) office today, PKR vice president N Surendran called on the participants to reject application forms distributed to them.

"The NRD insisted on issuing citizenship application forms to us, to which we responded: This is not right! These people are not foreigners, although the government treats them as such."

He was referring to the fact that the federal government treats such stateless individuals as foreigners under articles 16 and 19 of the constitution, though born in the country.

"They were born here, they have lived here all their lives, and should be subject to article 14. They should be allowed to become naturalised citizens of the country," he said.

About 100 people, including stateless Indians, attended a PKR-led protest at the NRD office in Jalan Kapar, Klang at 10.30am today over the plight of stateless Malaysians.

Roots here, still not citizens

Joining Surendran were Lawyers for Liberty's (LFL) Latheefah Koya, Kapar MP S Manikavasagam, Klang MP Charles Santiago and PKR supreme council member Tan Yee Kiew.

They objected to the government's refusal to issue blue MyKads to the stateless from the surrounding areas, many living in this country for countless number of years, but not granted citizenship.

NRD officers responded by distributing citizenship forms to those present and an argument between the officers and Surendran (in white shirt) broke out, with the latter reminding the former that the stateless need not apply for what is rightfully theirs.

PKR publicity director Nik Nazmi said the that the protest was to highlight the issue that citizens of the country could not be denied citizenship, adding that naturalising them was a federal issue.

"The bottom line is this. Do not deny Malaysians their statehood. Not a single citizen should be excluded from their rights.

"Without a blue Mykad, these people have no access to university education - they have limited access to healthcare, jobs. They live in the twilight zone," he said.

PKR, in collaboration with the Selangor government and Mysel (centre to help to acquire birth certificates and citizenship), had previously gathered the names of stateless Indians and sent the list to the JPN for consideration, but received little response.

"All assets that can be used should be used. Administrative inertia is no excuse, because the government should be proactive. Any government with political will be able to overcome these problems - this cannot continue", he said.

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