

Groups decry Najib's remarks as inappropriate

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A coalition of 25 NGOs have slammed Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for describing the results of the 13th general election as a 'Chinese tsunami' and defending Malay-language daily Utusan Malaysia's 'racial innuendos'.

The group, Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM) said Najib's statement, which has been echoed by Utusan Malaysia and others, has instigated hostility of the Malay community against the Chinese Malaysians.

Such "racist" remarks are inappropriate for someone holding office as prime minister and Umno leader, they said.

"We urge the prime minister to be a model for all the citizens of the country and refrain from uttering racist remarks to cover up the failures of BN's political governance that is ailing this great nation of ours.

"His racist post-election sentiment is undoing whatever credit his 1Malaysia concept may have accrued," GMB said in a statement today.

They also pointed out that in contrast to Najib's assessment, there was also a Kadazandusun swing against BN in Sabah, while PKR candidate Chua Jui Meng lost to an Indian Malaysian BN candidate in Segamat - a Chinese-majority constituency.

Meanwhile, the group noted that BN had lost all but two state capitals, and hence, "one may conclude that this was an 'urban tsunami', where BN was protected only by the digital gap in rural areas".

They also said that if a proportional representation system was used instead of the first-past-the post, system, "someone else" would have become the prime minister instead of Najib.

Among the members of GBM are Suaram, National Indian Rights Action Team (Niat), the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH), Anak Muda Sarawak, Islamic Renaissance Front, and the Malaysian Consultative Council Of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST).

In a separate statement yesterday, Pusat Komunikasi Rakyat (Komas), which is also among the GBM statement's endorsees, urged the government to ratify the

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD).

"The government needs to be a government of all Malaysians not in rhetoric only, but play a fully representative role of the nation," it said.

Moving away from race-based politics

It said the election results shows that Malaysians want to move away from race-based politics and focus on larger issues such corruption, abuse of power, and transparency. This is affirmed by the electoral defeat of Perkasa leaders Ibrahim Ali and Zulkifli Noordin.

"The government must bear the responsibility to educate, reformulate and change society instead of reinforcing racial stereotypes in politics. This must stop," it said.

Najib, in an immediate response to the polls results, said on live television that BN's worst-ever showing in a general election was due to a 'Chinese tsunami' and urged national reconciliation.

The next day, Utusan Malaysia front-paged the headline 'Apa lagi Cina mahu?' (what more do the Chinese want?), which drew flak from Netizens and politicians alike, including some from BN such as Umno supreme council member Saifuddin Abdullah.

Najib has since defended the paper, alluding that Chinese-language dailies have done the same, and then abruptly left the press conference venue.

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