

Indian NGOs back Waytha's role in gov't

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By Susan Loone

A group of Indian-based NGOs have expressed their support for Prime Minister Najib Razak for appointing P Waythamoorthy as a deputy minister in his new cabinet.

Waythamoorthy's appointment has been condemned by his brother Uthayakumar, who has described him as the "New Samy Vellu" or yes-man to Umno.

NONEBut Kulim-based Batu Grace Ashram founder and adviser Solomon BG Rajanthren said Najib had done the right thing, as there is a need for more Indian Malaysian representation in the government, especially from a NGO.

"A NGO would understand another NGO's concerns and needs. We feel that not enough attention has been given to such organisations and their tireless work," Solomon told a press conference in Penang, last night. flanked by 10 other NGO leaders.

"We do not blame anyone but NGOs have been helping the community without being given due notice and recognition and usually we have no proper channel to express our views or raise our issues."

For example, NGOs have carried out joint research with Universiti Sains Malaysia on ways to resolve the problems of Indian youths.

NONE"We sent (the paper) to the PM but nothing has happened. We truly need the right channels to approach him, so an Indian representative in government can perhaps help us," said Solomon (right).

"Whether the proposal is approved or not is secondary, but we do have such a paper to address the needs of the Indian poor and we hope it will be considered."

Solomon cited the example of MCA approaching NGOs in Kulim and offering them RM5,000 for their services to the community.

He said he had questioned the MCA official on the point of "giving such an amount to small NGOs to do their work", noting that the sum is inadequate for all the work that needs to be done.

He made it clear that the NGOs are not "for or against" anyone, when fielding a question on whether they support Hindraf or the role it has been given in Najib's government.

SOME 120 NGOs from Penang, Kedah and Perlis have arranged to meet Waythamoorthy (left) at the end of next month to discuss the community's needs.

Asked if the groups are seeking financial help from the government, Solomon replied that the NGOs will present Waythamoorthy with "viable and meaningful" projects for the community.

"The more representation we have in the government, the better. It is time for us to show our unity," he said.

"We are just happy that a NGO has been given an opportunity. They are from the grassroots and understand the struggles of the community very well."

Short rally

The NGOs represented at the press conference were Persatuan Kebajikan Ayirathil Oruvun Ithayakkani MGR based in Penang, Anbe Aanantham, Persatuan Kebajikan Sri Paramahansa Thasar, Kolej Yakin and Persatuan Komuniti Kaum India, from Kedah.

The group later held a short rally, holding placards and shouting "Hidup PM (long live PM)" and "1Malaysia".

They carried a large banner with Najib's photo and a caption reading 'We support the prime minister's decision to appoint a NGO as an additional representative for Indians'.

Waythamoorthy's new role came after a three-week hunger strike which ended when Najib endorsed Hindraf's 18-point blueprint, signing a memorandum of understanding with the NGO.

He then campaigned for BN in the 13th general election, calling on the Indian Malaysian community to help the coalition to regain its two-thirds majority in Parliament - which it failed to do.

Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/231433>