

Rocky start for Perkasa's new interracial council

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Within minutes of signing a charter to work out interracial issues this evening, a row broke out between two of the signatories - the initiator Perkasa and the New Indian Welfare and Charity Association (Perinbam).

The row was sparked by Perkasa deputy president Zulkifli Noordin's statement during the press conference to announce the interracial council, during which he defended the actions of SK Seri Pristana school headmaster Mohamad Nasir Mohd Nor.

Perinbam members quickly took issue with Zulkifli's statement. They surrounded him after the press conference ended and demanded an explanation.

Zulkifli defended his position and left the event, with unhappy Perinbam members leaving soon after.

Unhappy perinbam members about to leave in perkasa 2Perkasa president Ibrahim Ali then had to coerce Perinbam president U Thamocharan to stay back for Perkasa's buka puasa event, after the press conference.

Ibrahim was heard saying "sorry" to Thamocharan, though Malaysiakini were stopped by Perkasa members from coming near the conversation.

"There's nothing, these are two friends talking," a Perkasa member said.

Earlier, Zulkifli, who is no stranger to controversy surrounding Indian issues after being recorded on video allegedly insulting Hinduism, defended the makeshift canteen being placed in a shower room at SK Seri Pristana.

"We will defend the headmaster if necessary. He has been the subject of slander from people who have politicised this episode," he said.

He even said that Mohamad Nasir's actions should be "appreciated and not criticised".

Makeshift canteen in shower room

Mohamad Nasir had come under criticism over allegations that the makeshift

canteen, which was allegedly set up due to overcrowding in the school canteen, was accorded to non-Muslim students to eat there during the Ramadan fasting month.

He had denied this claim, insisting that the makeshift canteen has been in place since March and that even Malay students have eaten there before.

Irate Perinbam members surrounded Zulkifli shortly after members of the press left the conference room.

NONEThey demanded an explanation from him, but Zulkifli dodged their questions while appearing to insist what he said was correct.

Perinbam members then were seen voicing their dissatisfaction with several other Perkasa members.

"We are not like MIC. We will not keep quiet," a member was heard saying.

Thamotharan then brought his entourage out of the Sultan Sulaiman Club where the press conference took place, and questioned the necessity for Zulkifli to make such a statement in an event about interracial dialogues.

He was about to leave in his car when Ibrahim darted forward and quickly coerced him into attending the buka puasa event.

In a short speech before breaking fast, Ibrahim asked all parties to "tolerate" each other and avoid any "misunderstanding".

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