

## **Masing must apologise for failing Dayaks, says DAP**

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**By Dukau Papau**

Sarawakians have always been treated unfairly in the Federation of Malaysia.

"And in the course of such unfair discrimination, the rural people and the Dayaks have been hit the worst hit and suffer the most," says Sarawak DAP chairperson Chong Chieng Jen.

NONEChong (left), who is the Kota Sentosa assemblyperson and the MP for Bandar Kuching, added: "Therefore, Sarawak Land Development Minister and leader of the Dayaks, James Masing must apologise to the Dayaks on behalf of the BN government for their mistreatment.

He was reacting to a statement made by Masing, who is also the president of Parti Rakyat Sarawak, published by the local dailies yesterday.

Masing was reported to have said that in the coming 11th Sarawak state election, which will be due in 2015, the 24 Dayak seats would be where the big battles are and as such, the BN had to deliver what have been promised.

"More than that, we have to have a proper proposal for them (the rural voters)," Masing said.

Chong, in an email to Malaysiakini, went on to list some examples to illustrate his point that Masing was not delivering on assistance to his own community.

NONEThese included the recent petrol and diesel price hikes, which were affecting the rural people most as public transportation and fuel costs increase.

The unsafe condition of the Pan Borneo Highway, which affects the rural people most as they have to use it daily, and the shortfall in taking up scholarships, which affects the education level of the rural folk most because they have no other alternatives are some of the other issues of concern.

Rural people also suffer because of the lack of medical services, with some even dying while on the way to hospitals in the towns for delivery of their babies.

'Rural folk suffer under BN policies'

Also badly affecting the rural people are the lack of teaching materials and staff in the rural schools, which affect the learning environment of the rural children, he said.

Chong said: "The list goes on and on, with only one central issue, that is, the rural folk suffer the most under BN policies.

"Therefore, to show his sincerity, Masing must first apologise on behalf of the BN for all the past mistreatment of the Dayaks, and thereafter list out what his so-called 'proper proposals for them' (the rural voters) are."

dayak NCR land 220405 stop signChong added: "Masing's statement (in the local daily yesterday) day is a tacit admission that only with a strong opposition presence will the BN take the plights of the Dayaks seriously.

"His statement seems to give the impression that in the past elections, there was no need to deliver the promises and also no need to have a proper development proposal for the rural voters because those Dayak seats were not heatedly contested seats.

"It is only when the big battles come to the Dayak seats that the plights of the Dayaks have to be taken seriously by the BN.

"That explains why the Dayak communities are still among the poorest in the country."

Chong said that in the past two months, Sarawak DAP has started to concentrate its efforts in its "Go Rural" drive.

Last week, DAP launched its "Impian Sarawak" campaign in Kuala Lumpur, calling on all Malaysians, Sarawakians or otherwise, to be the agents of change for Sarawak.

The response has been tremendous, and beyond our expectations, Chong said.

"I believe Masing is feeling the heat and the pressure that had prompted him to admit to the past neglects of the Dayaks by the BN.

"We are now in our 50th year of the formation of Malaysia and yet we have rural Dayaks with no clean, treated water and not connected to the grid of state electricity supply company Syarikat SESCO Bhd.

"Yet the BN government is boasting about making Sarawak the powerhouse, selling electricity to large industries and even to a neighbouring country," Chong added.

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