

## **DAP Malay leader refutes Zulkifli's '50 sen race' remark**

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**By Susan Loone**

As the embattled DAP gears up for its re-election on Sunday, several DAP leaders and members have publicly denounced claims of Malays being marginalised or treated badly in the party.

NONEThe latest to join the fray is DAP senator Ariffin Omar (left), who says that the party does not promote racism, contrary to the claims made by former vice-chairperson Zulkifli Mohd Noor.

"How much value does Zulkifli attach to himself all the while when he was in DAP?" asked Ariffin, referring to his comrade's claim that Malays in the party are just "a 50 sen race".

Without them, Zulkifli added, DAP would not be able to reach one million members.

Zulkifli has also said DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng is a "dictator" and has a hidden agenda to strengthen his standing and that of his father Kit Siang in the party.

As a supporter of DAP for close to 30 years before eventually becoming the party's appointed senator in 2012, Ariffin dismissed claims the party is "racist".

"Malays in the DAP see themselves as Malaysians. To me, this is an Islamic approach to Malaysian politics," he told Malaysiakini.

As for his chances as a DAP central executive committee (CEC) contestant, Ariffin said although he failed to make it to the top 20 spot in the previous election, this time he would leave it to the wisdom of the members.

"They are savvy enough to understand what is at stake," he said.

As for Zulkifli's controversial remarks about DAP and Lim, urging him to resign as he was upsetting many Malay members, Ariffin said he expected it from the former Penang municipal councillor.

"It is best for him to decide whether he feels he can contribute to changes in the country if he chooses to remain with the DAP," said Ariffin.

"If not, he should consider his options."

Ariffin and Zulkifli are two of the 62 DAP candidates vying for the 20 CEC spots, and they are joined by seven other Malay candidates who are in the running on Sunday.

Group: Refrain from playing with racial sentiments

Meanwhile, a group of DAP members have urged the "activists" within the party to refrain from playing with racial sentiments, which they said would hamper the party's aspiration towards justice for all.

The group said they were disappointed to see certain quarters who have contributed much to the party eventually fail due to their own egos and their struggle for influence and political power.

They concurred with Ariffin that placing a value on DAP Malay leaders was malicious as it was against the party's non-race agenda.

"How would DAP be different from Umno if it uses racial sentiments? Just because one is born into a certain race, should he or she be given a special status and different rights in a political party?" they asked.

The group said Zulkifli's actions are "shameful" and must be stopped immediately as it shows that there are activists within the party who have failed to understand the party's aspirations.

"Every activist who wants to be appreciated by the party should strengthen the party's (non-racist) agenda to build a better Malaysia regardless of race, social status or position."

The statement by the DAP Malay leaders was jointly signed by Mahdzir Ibrahim (central DAP Socialist Youth member), Hafiz Zainuddin (DAP Jalan Brunei Pudu deputy chairperson), Mohd Haris Zuan (Bukit Bendera Dapsy chief), Nur Fitriah Abd Halim (Bukit Bendera member), Dyana Sofya (Kit Siang's political secretary), Rozaimin Elias (Bangkok Lane treasurer), Edry Faizal Eddy Yusof (Bandar Utama DAP pro-tem deputy chief), Mohamad Samat (Selangor Dapsy organising secretary), Mohammad Firdaus Babh (Selangor Dapsy assistant secretary), Wira Andika A Halim (Bukit Bintang Baru member), and Izmil Amri Ismail (Bangkok Lane DAP member).

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