

'Najib childish to say he mooted reconciliation'
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PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution has chided Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for claiming credit as being the first to moot national reconciliation.

"We don't want to dispute who started it first. That is like children fighting over rambutan," he quipped in response to Najib's blog posting yesterday.

Instead, Saifuddin said, PKR welcomes the PM's seriousness on moving this forward.

He called for the reconciliation plan to cover rising ethnic tensions, rising cost of living, good governance and economic rejuvenation.

"The Pakatan Rakyat presidential council will meet next month before our Pakatan Rakyat convention on March 8 to discuss the next step," he said.

"However, as an immediate response, we would like the government to explain how it plans to reduce racial tensions, which are on the rise.

"This is our reaction to the prime minister of Malaysia and not to the Umno president."

Speaking along with Saifuddin at the PKR headquarters at Tropicana in Petaling Jaya was PKR vice-president Tian Chua, who said reconciliation could not take place if the Najib administration does not include the views of others.

Tian Chua, who is also Batu MP, said by formulating the framework on its own, the reconciliation plan would be no different than Najib's 1Malaysia or transformation programmes.

As a government that did not command the popular vote, Najib's administration does not have the mandate or the credibility to act solo.

"The (government's) support level is about 47 percent and that obliges it to look into the aspirations of the 52 percent.

"When we talk about consensus or reconciliation, it must be put into that context," Tian Chua said.

He added that due consideration should also be given to the "mushrooming" of extremist groups with alleged "tacit approval from the ruling party".

Framework needed

To a question, Tian Chua said the National Unity Consultative Council's (NUCC) ongoing unity dialogues to collect input on the unity framework nationwide were not enough to engage different stakeholders on the matter.

"I sympathise with NUCC as it neither represents the ruling party nor the opposition... how to

forge forward when the members are appointed by the government but cannot get support from government?" he asked.

He also said it was pointless to now debate whether 'race' should still be in official forms, as mooted by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Joseph Kurup in the first NUCC dialogue, without coming up with a holistic framework.

This, he said, should be discussed through a bipartisan forum instead of "through the media".

"In principle, any measure to reduce ethnocentric issues is welcome, but we cannot go into steps and measures yet... It's a premature exercise.

"What we want is to get all parties to come together to discuss how we can overcome extreme measures.

"Otherwise, it will be like the 'Allah' issue, where Pakatan and (BN) defend their positions but it doesn't go anywhere. There needs to be a process," Tian Chua said.

Yesterday, Najib in his blog said the national reconciliation plan would be unveiled and implemented in the next few months.

Najib also said that extremists need not be condemned but simply ignored so as to deprive them of the publicity they craved for.

He also claimed he was the first to moot reconciliation, after a divisive 13th general election.

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