

MCA: 'Not secular' remark may break up Malaysia
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Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir's remark on Malaysia not being a secular state may spilt the people of Peninsular and East Malaysia right down the middle leading to the break up of the Federation of Malaysia, MCA warned today.

MCA syariah law and policy implementation special task force chairperson Gan Ping Sieu said Malaysians, particularly East Malaysians, were inflamed by the minister's comment which had alienated certain segments of the population, besides heightening political tension.

"If Jamil Khir's stand is the official stand, then what if Sarawak finds it necessary to break away from the federation?"

"The breaking up of the federation could be an inevitable consequence," Gan told a press conference today.

He said the issue of Malaya as a secular state was debated during 1962 Cobbold Commission, before the formation of Malaysia in 1963.

Gan (right) said the secular nature of the Federal Constitution stating that Islam was the federation's religion had been the basis of nation-building since 1957 and this was reinforced in 1963.

A former MCA vice-president, Gan said Jamil Khir's statement jeopardised the interests of BN.

"BN's power base is in East Malaysia. Jamil Khir is not only damaging BN political interests, but it is even more serious as he is harming the nation's interests.

"No national leader can bear such historical responsibility," he said.

Agreeing with Gan, Sabah DAP deputy chairperson Stephen Wong (left in photo) said Jamil should retract his "insensitive" remark and apologise.

In a statement, Wong said that Jamil showed ignorance on the formation of Malaysia and "offended" Sabah and Sarawak residents.

"I also urge him to apologise to all Sabahans and Sarawakians, openly.

"The prime minister must state his stance on Jamil's statement, whether he agrees with

Jamil or not," Wong said.

'PM should drop Jamil Khir'

In his written answer to a parliamentary question from DAP Sibul MP Oscar Ling yesterday, Jamil said Malaysia was not a secular state due to the special position of Islam in the federal constitution.

However, citing several historical records such as the Reid Report, the Working Party Meeting, the London Conference talks and former prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman's parliamentary reply dated May 1, 1958, Gan said Malaysia was without doubt a secular state.

He also pointed out that recent controversies, including the hudud issue that was brought up by Jamil and the PAS leadership, have caused a lot of unnecessary and unproductive debates among the people.

Sharing Wong's views, Gan also urged Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to drop Jamil in the coming cabinet reshuffle.

"No amount of silence can be elegant at this juncture. The BN leadership must deliberate and put an immediate stop to these aggravations. I call upon the prime minister to drop Jamil during the cabinet reshuffle.

"BN does not need a senior cabinet minister who behaves like DAP and PAS, combining racial and religious politics into one," Gan added.

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