

Najib ticked off for making senators as ministers
MalaysiaKini.com
Jun 30, 2014

The Youth wing of Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) has indirectly ticked-off Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for appointing senators and making them ministers, rather than Members of Parliament who are responsible to the rakyat.

In a statement yesterday, its vice-chief Jesi Bintoh said that under the Malaysian electoral system, the government is selected based on the party or coalition that has the majority of elected representatives in Parliament.

The BN at the federal level was formed by the majority of elected representatives it had in Parliament and not its senators, Jesi said referring to Najib's recent appointment of senators as ministers.

Najib's government has the most number of senators appointed as ministers, prompting many to describe Najib's government as the 'government of senators'.

Jesi said: "Ministerial positions should be given to MPs because they are elected by the people to govern. Senators are appointed to their positions, and many actually are those who have lost in elections.

"Senatorship in Malaysia is also given to minority groups and non-governmental bodies, such as those representing the Orang Asli, the Malaysian Trades Union Congress and religious organisations.

"They are given to these groups to give them a voice in the government, but certainly, the senate is not a place to reward those who lose in the elections."

PRS president James Masing (right), who is the Sarawak minister of land development, has also been very critical of the federal government for sidelining the Dayak community in the appointment of federal ministers.

For the second time, PRS and Sarawak Progressive Democratic Party (SPDP), which represent the Dayak community, have been neglected when Najib recently reshuffled his cabinet.

PRS has six MPs while SPDP has three.

In announcing his cabinet after the general election last year, Najib named two MPs from PRS as deputy ministers, but none from SPDP. In the previous cabinet, PRS and SPDP had two deputy ministers each.

Not even one PRS member in federal cabinet

PRS expressed its unhappiness with Najib for not appointing one of the MPs as a full minister, so much so that it wanted to boycott the swearing in of the federal cabinet.

Following this threat, Najib appointed Joseph Entulu Belaun as a minister in the prime minister's department.

Former deputy minister of information, communication and culture, Joseph Salang, was appointed deputy minister of tourism, but he declined the offer as the party had hoped he would be given a more suitable and responsible post as minister.

Salang has served three terms as deputy minister.

Dissatisfied with Najib's handling of the ministerial appointments in respect of PRS, Masing warned that the next parliamentary election could see the Dayak voting for the opposition.

Sarawak, which has 13 Dayak MPs, will see a tough fight in the coming state election as the opposition parties have been exploiting the marginalisation of the Dayak community, he said.

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