

'Najib, consult Perkasa backers on harmony bills'

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The prime minister is urged to turn to former leaders, and eminent Perkasa supporters such as former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, former chief justice Abdul Hamid Mohamad and former inspector-general of police Abdul Rahim Noor, to discuss the drafts of the national unity and harmony bills.

Perkasa president Ibrahim Ali (right) urged Najib Abdul Razak not to rush into implementing the new bills drawn up by the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC), warning that the government's experience when repealing the Internal Security Act (ISA) should serve as a lesson.

"Hence we propose that Najib consults with Dr Mahathir, Abdul Hamid, Abdul Rahim along with former chief justices Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim and Zaki Azmi," Ibrahim said in a statement, adding that those who disagreed with these names were both "blind" and "deaf".

He said this when responding favourably to an announcement by de-facto law minister Nancy Shukri that the bills were yet to be finalised.

Nancy had yesterday said that her ministry is holding consultation with various stakeholders.

Perkasa has been critical of the bills, especially after government-formed NUCC condemned a statement uttered by Perkasa information chief Ruslan Kassim (right), saying it would constitute an offence under the three new bills proposed to replace the Sedition Act.

During a fiery speech at a rally near the Selangor palace last month, Ruslan threatened to "chop off the heads" of those found insulting Islam and the Selangor sultan.

Following this, secretary-general for the Malay rights group, Syed Hassan Syed Ali, threatened to quit Umno, along with other members, if the government accepted the bills.

Ibrahim added that Perkasa was preparing a memorandum on national unity, which is being worked on by a coalition comprising 55 Malay and Islamic NGOs, led by Abdul Hamid, with former Armed Forces chief Ghazali Mohd Seth and Abdul Rahim as joint deputy chairpersons.

The draft, he said, would be ready by August and a convention would be held by mid-September to gain approval for the memorandum.

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