

Zahid will not allow Negara-Ku to register
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Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today declared that his ministry will not allow anti-racism NGO Negara-Ku to register as an organisation under its current name.

Ahmad Zahid said the movement, formed by prominent rights activists, has yet to apply for registration with the Registrar of Societies (ROS).

"Even if it were to apply for registration with the Registrar of Societies (ROS), the name Negara-Ku is not suitable because it belongs to Malaysia.

"Negara-Ku refers to the song Negaraku which is recognised as the national anthem under Section 2 of the National Anthem Act 1968.

"It can cause confusion among the public, and in line with Section 7(3)(d)(i) and (iii) of the Societies Act 1966, it should not be registered," he said in a statement posted on the Home Ministry's official Facebook page today.

Section 7(3)(d)(i) of the Act allows the ROS to refuse registration of any organisation whose name appears to mislead or deceive the public to the true character and purpose of a society, while Section 7(3)(d)(iii) allows for the same to apply if the ROS finds the name to be "undesirable".

Ahmad Zahid maintained that any organisation intending to conduct its activities legally in the country must be registered under the Societies Act 1966.

"The government would like to stress that an organisation that conducts its activities without being registered under the Societies Act 1966 is an illegal organisation," he said.

Movement against racism

Earlier this month national laureate A Samad Said and former Malaysian Bar president Ambiga Sreenevasan formed a new NGO to battle racism and extremism in the nation, called Negara-Ku (my country).

The coalition is made up of 60 other NGOs and is chaired by former Bersih steering committee member and Ikram vice-president Zaid Kamaruddin.

Previously, Ambiga and Samad led the Bersih movement for clean and fair elections, which like Negara-Ku, comprised a coalition of NGOs.

In the case of Bersih, even though it was not registered, its member organisations were.

Despite this, the government in 2011 declared Bersih an illegal organisation.

However, the Kuala Lumpur High Court overturned the declaration the following year, stating that the government decision was "tainted with irrationality".

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