

Mahathir: Little chance for non-racial Malaysia
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While some dream of a day when Malaysians would no longer be divided by race, former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad thinks the chances of that happening are “minimal”.

“We will continue to be identified by race because the moderates in society dare not rebut what is being said by the extremists in the society,” he told reporters today.

He was holding a press conference after a closed-door function hosted by the NGO Akademi Belia, and said this when asked to summarise what he had said during the function.

Asked to elaborate, Mahathir explained that his is a result of the ‘social contract’ where it is agreed that each ethnic group would maintain its own cultural identity.

“Because of that, because we don’t want to change, there will never be a true Malaysian,” he said, pinning the blame on the minorities.

In contrast with countries like the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, he said the emigrants and their children there have adopted the local culture and language as their own.

Examples he gave include former Thai prime ministers Thaksin Shinawatra (left) and Chuan Leekpai, former Philippine President Corazon Aquino, and Jakarta governor-designate Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, all of Chinese-descent.

“They identify totally with their country. They no longer say ‘We are Indonesia Chinese’. Corazon Aquino or her son (incumbent Philippine President Benigno Aquino III) do not say ‘We are Filipino Chinese’.

“Some still say such things, but they won’t get positions (of power),” said Mahathir who is patron of right-wing group

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