

Anwar: Gov't must say no to 'pendatang' labels
MalaysiaKini.com
Oct 22, 2014

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim has condemned those who label others 'pendatang' (immigrants), saying such behaviour would be punished severely in other countries.

Anwar said he knows of a senator who was forced to resign for questioning the position of the African-Americans.

"It is time for us to look forward and give our children the space to feel they are truly a part of this nation, to be respected, and not questioned as these hurt people's feelings," Anwar said.

"I am a Malay and I do not say I am not proud of my race and history but do not say these things with the intention to insult others," said the Permatang Pauh MP.

"This is the problem. Why bring up the issue of immigrants? What is the issue?" he asked.

He was speaking during his visit to the Deepavali open house of Penang Deputy Chief Minister II P Ramasamy.

Anwar (right) urged Putrajaya to be firm and not just speak about multiracialism and rejecting extremism but not act against those who threaten the situation.

He pointed out that the extremists, including the groups they "outsource" to, actually support the government.

Still debating citizenship

He added that Malaysia is "unique" as it still debates basic issues of citizenship 57 years after it gained independence.

"In other democratic countries, citizenship is accepted as a fact and is undisputable.

"Why do we choose Bahasa Melayu as an official language? It is accepted by all. We can't dispute the origin of this," he added.

He was referring to a Johor Gerakan delegate Tan Lai Soon whose membership was suspended for saying that Malays are also 'pendatang'.

Gerakan issued him a show-cause letter, insisting that Tan's remarks was not the party's stand.

In response, former information minister Zainuddin Maidin said that while it is true that Malays are also pendatang, they came first and established themselves as rulers.

Meanwhile, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (left) said that while action was taken against Tan, others who questioned the citizenship of others should be penalised as well.

"Don't just take action against one person and others who do the same are let off.

"Who first uttered the term 'pendatang'? We know who said it first as we have never brought up the subject.

"To us, everyone is a Malaysian. Let us move forward as Malaysians with a Malaysian spirit, this is what makes us special," he said.

No justification

Meanwhile, DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang said there was no justification for any Malaysian to describe another Malaysian from a different ethnicity as 'pendatang'.

In a statement, the Gelang Patah MP said that this is especially so as the term is loaded in a "very derogatory, pejorative and even abusive sense".

"This is in fact questioning the citizenship rights of Malaysians, which is entrenched as one of the four sensitive rights in the constitution, whereby it becomes an automatic sedition offence to call for the withdrawal of a Malaysian's citizenship."

He also called on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to review BN's nation-building policies as Malaysians are not ready to call one another immigrants.

He said that this also signifies the failure of the 1Malaysia policy.

"Calling loyal, patriotic Malaysians born, bred and who will die in Malaysia as 'pendatang' must be condemned as a form of extremism which Najib had denounced in the United Nations and international forums since becoming prime minister," he said.