

Gerakan wants BN to act on 'extremist' members

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Gerakan has urged all BN parties to follow its lead to suspend any member who makes 'extremist' remarks at annual general assemblies.

He said BN parties must do so following Gerakan's immediate action of suspending Johor delegate Tan Lai Soon for calling Malays 'pendatang' (immigrant) at the party's AGM last weekend.

"We have to take action immediately especially since Gerakan does not want to see any leaders from other BN component parties making racist or extreme remarks during their annual general meetings.

"We will urge party leaders to take immediate action on its members who make such remarks," Gerakan secretary-general Liang Teck Meng said at press conference today.

Liang (left) was speaking in general terms, but the only major BN party yet to hold its AGM is Umno.

Earlier a proposal was made at a division level Umno AGM for the abolition of vernacular schools to be discussed at the national general meeting. This prompted an outcry including from Gerakan.

While debating the Gerakan president's policy speech on Sunday, Tan said: "Let me make the positions of Malaysians clear: Malays, Chinese and Indians were all pendatang, except the Orang Asli, Sabahans and Sarawakians, who are the original bumiputera."

The following day, Gerakan issued him a show-cause letter, urging him to explain his position within 14 days, failing which, he will be expelled from the party.

Zero tolerance

Under pressure from its members unhappy over the suspension, Liang today said the move was in line with the party constitution.

Liang explained that it was only natural for a member to be suspended pending investigation by the party's central working committee.

He also reiterated that Tan's (below) remarks were wholly against they party's stand.

"I want to stress that no race should be labelled as pendatang. What Tan said goes against the party's stand," said Liang in a press conference today.

He also recalled the case of then Bukit Bendera Umno division chief Ahmad Ismail who called the Chinese 'pendatang' in 2008.

"Penang Gerakan Youth wanted to leave BN over his statement. As a result, he was suspended for three years over his remarks."

Asked if this breaches Tan's freedom of speech, Liang argued that even the Parliament has its standing orders.

He also said he is "surprised" that the DAP, which promotes multiculturalism, supports Tan's remark.

"I cannot tolerate it and I feel offended if they want to claim everyone is pendatang," he said.

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