

Ramasamy: What about Malaysia's 300,000 stateless people?

MalaysiaKini.com

Oct 7th, 2015

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Penang Deputy Chief Minister P Ramasamy has condemned Putrajaya for its inconsistent stand against refugees in response to Prime Minister Najib Razak announcing Malaysia will accept 3,000 Syrian refugees.

“What about the Sri Lanka asylum seekers, the Rohingya refugees, and our very own stateless people?” Ramasamy asked at a press conference in Komtar today, after announcing that Penang will host an International Forum on Human Rights in Sri Lanka on Nov 21.

Ramasamy said Malaysia’s stand against the human rights atrocities against Tamils in Sri Lanka is disgraceful as the government has always taken the side of the Sri Lanka regime, deporting asylum seekers on grounds they are “terrorists”.

“Why are there contradictions in our asylum policies? Did he do that because he wants to show the world he is a good Muslim? What about the Rohingyas in our backyard? Maybe they are not white enough?” he asked.

Ramasamy (photo) urged Malaysia to be consistent when dealing with refugees, saying he has no problems with the entry of Syrians, who are facing a massive civil war in their own country.

“In Malaysia we have 300,000 stateless persons, and we have formed a taskforce on it in Penang but we face many difficulties especially from the Home Ministry.

“After two years since it was formed in 2013, the taskforce has met 553 stateless persons but we only manage to help 37, and five were referred to court.

“Why doesn’t the Malaysian government address these local problems first? This shows the hypocrisy of the BN government, lack of ideas and political will to deal with the question of refugees,” he added.

The Penang International Forum on Human Rights Violations in Sri Lanka, will be organised by the World Tamil Secretariat under the Penang Society for the Advancement of Tamils, Ramasamy said.

Gross violations

The forum will focus on the recently published report of the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights on Sri Lanka (Osil) which has provided a detailed account of the gross violations - including involuntary disappearances and killings - before, during and after war against Tamil women, men and children allegedly by the Sri Lanka

government forces.

The report suggests setting up hybrid courts with international judges to probe those who committed these crimes.

“However, a recently passed US resolution in the UN Human Rights Council has diverged from the Osil report, and instead of calling for international judges and hybrid courts, they have only called for a domestic inquiry in Sri Lanka, and this resolution was accepted in Geneva,” Ramasamy explained.

“The question is why the divergence in this report with the resolution backed by United States? It is because the US is more interested in geopolitics, and wishes to protect the Sri Lanka regime from being declared as a country that practices genocide against Tamils?” he added.

The forum will be officiated by Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (photo) while Amanah president Mohamed Sabu, DAP Gelang Patah MPs Lim Kit Siang and Ipoh Barat MP M Kulasegaran will be speakers, together with several eminent defenders of human rights from Sri Lanka.

“We will show how the Pakatan Harapan human rights policies differ from the ones by BN federal government,” Ramasamy declared.

On how the forum can help the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, Ramasamy said “We are not so much concerned about influencing the government although I have also raised issues about human rights violations in Palestine and Aceh.

“We need to raise our voices, it is only natural for Tamil communities all over the world to have concerns about what is happening to the Tamils in Sri Lanka”.

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