

Perkasa: Dock ministers' salaries, not slash scholarships

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Malay rights pressure group Perkasa has urged the government to cut the salaries of ministers instead of scrapping scholarships for overseas students.

Perkasa argued that it is not fair for the youths to be made to pay for the failure of the leadership in managing the economic crisis of the country and its national expenditures.

"It is clear here that it all stems from the government's failure to administer the country, until it has plunged into financial troubles, which have resulted in scholarships being cut off.

"Providing scholarship is the government's responsibility and by right what it should do is to cut their (ministers') salaries, reduce their pay or scrutinise the corruption in the country, like what had occurred in the Youth and Sports Ministry recently, involving RM100 million," Perkasa Youth wing chief Irwan Fahmi Deris said in a statement.

Irwan (photo) views the dropping of scholarships as something that should not have happened as continuing education is important for students, especially the bumiputera.

"I think that this shouldn't have happened as education is important, especially to the bumiputera," he added.

Yesterday, Perkasa sent a memorandum on the matter to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to protest the recall of 744 Public Service Department (JPA) scholars who were supposed to go overseas to complete their studies.

These students have instead been told to further their studies in local universities.

Hope for the Agong to intervene

Irwan said Perkasa hoped that the Agong could intervene and ensure the restoration of the overseas scholarships to the students involved.

"Perkasa views the revocation of the scholarships as an irresponsible act of the government as scholarships are one of the special bumiputera rights as enshrined in the Federal Constitution, under Article 153.

"Thus Perkasa appeals to His Majesty to help restore the scholarships that have been cancelled," he said.

Prior to this, the Dewan Rakyat was told that RM240 million would be saved if Putrajaya

were to scrap the 744 overseas scholarships.

However, Minister in the Prime Minister Department Azalina Othman Said clarified that the scholarships were not scrapped, but, as per the Budget 2016 recalibration announced in January, the 744 scholars would now have to further their studies locally.

The matter made headlines when several students held a press conference after they were informed by JPA staff that the department would no longer pay for their overseas education.

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