

PM challenged to convene Parliament and elevate S'wak, Sabah as regions

Malaysiakini

11 April 2021

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has been challenged to reconvene Parliament in order to properly elevate Sabah and Sarawak as regions.

This came after Muhyiddin said Sarawak should not be referred to as a state (negeri) but a region (wilayah), at an event in Kuching last week.

“From now on, we should not forget that Sarawak is a 'region', 'wilayah'. I feel like it is a great region. I can't say it's a state because it's big though the population is not,” he reportedly said after a meeting with Sarawak's ruling GPS coalition.

This was followed by a purportedly leaked National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (Finas) circular referring to Sabah and Sarawak as regions.

Critics have said that simply referring to Sabah and Sarawak as regions would be purely cosmetic unless the Federal Constitution is amended to restore the 1963

Malaysia Agreement (MA63) and put the two East Malaysian regions as equals to Peninsular Malaysia (Malaya).

Thus, Sarawak Pakatan Harapan said Parliament, which has been suspended under the state of emergency, needs to be reconvened.

"We call upon Muhyiddin to immediately convene Parliament to table the Constitutional Amendment Bill for the restoration of Sarawak and Sabah's status in the federation as envisaged in the MA63," said Sarawak Harapan chief Chong Chieng Jen in a statement yesterday.

He added that all DAP and Sarawak Harapan MPs will support such an amendment, giving Muhyiddin a two-thirds majority to amend the Constitution.

"The ball is now in the Perikatan Nasional government and GPS' court. Convene Parliament sitting and table the Constitutional Amendment Bill.

"Do not merely pay lip service on the restoration of Sarawak's status as bait for votes.

"That is insulting and degrading the spirit of MA63 which forms our country," Chong said.

GPS previously did not support a bid by Harapan to amend the Constitution to restore MA63, saying the proposed amendments were superficial, and that the then-Harapan government had not properly consulted them.

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Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/570246>