

## **LETTER | Merdeka should bring out our humanity**

**Malaysiakini**

**28 August 2022**

**Ronald Benjamin**

LETTER | We will be celebrating our Independence Day shortly. This year's Merdeka celebration comes in the context of turbulence around the world which has its roots in the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and rising global inflation.

We as a nation had experienced some sense of independence when the nation's top kleptocrat was sentenced to jail, and several more cases are currently proceeding in the courts.

Authentic independence is not merely about being freed from colonialism, or a certain community's rights need to be safeguarded with tolerance for other communities. It is about transforming our strong embedded ethnic and religious identity into a common humanity where interaction among Malaysians takes place from a spiritual bond of love, compassion and justice.

When love, compassion and justice take place in a broader sense, then the very

core of us would be in harmony with nature and environmental justice, which has become critical as the world is suffering from a relativistic ideology and human-made climate change.

The problem with our nation today is we are divided on various issues that have been seen from a political lens with an ethno-religious flavour. This takes on a political expression of partisanship, where there is no consensus among political opponents on the objective value of law, justice and the preservation of the environment.

Every issue of national interest is seen from a political lens, and this paves the way for the corrupt and bigots to misuse their authority and create followers that are blind to the reality of truth that lurks within the shadows of one's perception.

For Malaysia to be a truly independent nation, it has to first transform its ethnic and religious identity towards humanity by getting rid of bigots and the corrupt system in place that empowers the corrupt, racist, religious extremist and environmental criminals.

When there is common humanity, there will be consensus on fundamental principles of governing the nation. This form of solidarity would empower us to stand tall to oppose any form of foreign colonialism and imperialism.

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