

**Najib reprimands Maybank over race policy**  
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The government today reprimanded the nation's top lender Maybank for a policy which requires racial quotas in law firms it deals with which favour majority ethnic Muslim Malays.

The government-linked company (GLC) has come under fire after revelations it requires the law firms to have at least three partners, one of whom must be a "bumiputera" with a 50 percent stake.

Malaysia has positive discrimination policies favouring bumiputeras - Malays and indigenous groups - but Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said Maybank should be dealing with non-bumiputeras as well.

"There should not be any hard and fast rules but there should be efforts to help both," Najib was quoted as saying by the state Bernama news agency from the United States, where he is visiting.

"The government's policy is that we want to encourage GLCs to give work to both bumiputera and non-bumiputera (companies)," he added.

"It is unfortunate that sometimes people interpret it in their own way."

**Bank Negara asked to intervene**

The bank's policy was highlighted over the weekend by the Bar Council, which strongly criticised the policy as discriminatory.

"When you're talking about professionals, there can be no other yardstick except merit," the council's president, Ambiga Sreenevasan, told AFP Wednesday.

Secretary-General of the opposition DAP Lim Guan Eng today presented a memorandum to the central Bank Negara, calling on it to intervene.

Maybank would not comment Wednesday, but said in a statement last week it would review the policy, which it said did not rely on race as the only consideration in appointing solicitors.

"The necessary review will be undertaken with due consideration to the feedback received," it said.

"Equity ownership has never been the sole and overriding determinant for emplacement."

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