

'Gerakan a non-Malay version of Perkasa'
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Penang Pakatan Rakyat Youth wing, still sore at Gerakan for accusing Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng of being biased against non-Malays in his implementation of state policies, has likened the party to ultra-Malay group Perkasa.

The Youth members had earlier defended Lim at the Speakers Corner in Esplanade in Penang, where Gerakan first made the remarks.

Yesterday, about 30 gathered outside the Gerakan headquarters in Macalister Road to demand an apology from the BN component party.

They are miffed with Kedah Gerakan secretary Tang Hing Lye for complaining that Lim had treated the Malays better by allocating them more funds.

"Gerakan seems to be playing with fire to whip up racial sentiments, by bringing up issues of fund allocation for the various communities in Penang," said Pakatan state secretary Ng Wei Aik (left) at a press conference outside the Gerakan premises.

"It shows that Gerakan is no longer a multi-racial party, but has become like (a non-Malay version of) Perkasa, which continues to question allocations for the development of Islamic affairs in the state," he said.

'Funding regardless of race'

Ng dismissed the criticisms (below, centre in photo) as "baseless", saying state funds were set aside according to the needs of the poor regardless of ethnicity, gender, religious and political affiliation.

"Annually we allocate RM9.55 million for education which includes Chinese, Tamil and Muslim schools," he said.

"Gerakan's allegations that we merely allocate RM8 million for non-bumiputera is a political gimmick, and is not based on facts," he added.

Gerakan's statements at the Square last month had irked a group of senior citizens present, who lambasted their party leader for alleging that Lim had discriminated against non-Malays.

Gerakan in response accused the DAP of mobilising the group to heckle the speakers, which DAP has since denied.

Meanwhile, PAS representative Mohamed Farouk (left in photo) who was also present at the gathering yesterday, also urged the Gerakan to apologise to Pakatan Rakyat and to 1.6 million Penangites for "misleading and hurting their sentiments".

"Please do not become like Umno, which continues to whip up racial sentiments resulting in disunity and fights between the Malay (and the non-Malay) communities," he said.

"By doing this, Gerakan appears to be creating problems and inciting racial hatred between not only the different races, but (within) the Chinese community as well," he added.

Meanwhile, Penang Gerakan legal and human rights bureau chief Baljit Singh slammed Pakatan for not respecting the right to free speech.

"What is the purpose of Pakatan protesting outside Gerakan headquarters...? Is it to warn Gerakan to stop talking? Is it to threaten Gerakan?" he asked in a press statement emailed to Malaysiakini.

"Is Pakatan using strong-arm tactics against those who dissent? Is Pakatan going to protest every time someone criticises them?"

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