

**Popular DJ axed over 'sensitive' issues**  
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Another issue has turned hot - the removal of Jamaluddin Ibrahim - a host of the Chinese radio station 988's popular Hello Malaysia programme - for allegedly offending the authorities with his remarks on sensitive racial issues.

Jamaluddin told Malaysiakini that the management told him that he had been taken off the air indefinitely from today.

According to him the management received a letter from MCMC yesterday.

The letter named him, saying that the programme is suspected of "threatening national security" and "compromising race relationships".

NONEWhen asked who had directed that he take leave, Jamaluddin (left) said he had no idea, as he personally hadn't seen the letter.

Hello Malaysia is broadcast every Monday to Friday from 8.10am to 10am. It is hosted by two permanent DJs -Jamaluddin and Qiu Yue and another who is a rotating host.

The programme provides the public with the opportunity to call in and air their views on various current issues and is well-received by the Chinese community.

Sensitive remarks, sensitive to whom?

In the meantime, Qiu Yue and today's rotating host Joe Liaw, shaken by the news of their colleague's departure, wept unashamedly with the microphones still switched on. Both confirmed that Jamaluddin was ordered to take leave.

However, they couldn't provide any reason or from where the directive had come.

NONEBut they did ask their audience whether the programme had "incited ethnic tension", and "someone said that our programme has affected national and social development and touched on sensitive issues and creating social unrest".

Apparently the alleged last straw for Jamaluddin's exit was last Friday's show, when well-known commenter OYoung Wenfeng was invited to talk on racial discrimination.

OYoung told Malaysiakini that he suspects their remarks that the authorities had used racial issues to worsen the relationships among the races did not go down well with the powers-that-be.

"That might have been the problem but our main point was to help eliminate racism and promote racial harmony."

He then urged the public to pressure the MCA not to interfere with media freedom.

And today, Jamaluddin's colleagues turned the Hello Malaysia programme into a tribute for him while rallying support from their audience. Both hosts repeatedly urged listeners to send in SMS and post comments on their Facebook page to show support.

Power of the new media

They played sentimental songs and discussed Jamaluddin's personal character, qualities and hosting style, among others.

Joe claimed that he received the bad news yesterday night, and upon inquiry, Jamaluddin told him that his leave is indefinite.

Jamaluddin, at the same time, posted comments on his Facebook page, urging Qiu Yue and Joe to stay strong, and that the talk show must continue.

His fate has sparked heated discussion over the Internet. Until 1pm, over 3,000 comments had been posted on Jamaluddin's Facebook page to show support for the radio programme.

There are also at least four newly-formed Facebook groups supporting Jamaluddin, including "Save Jamal On Air", "Jamaluddin Ibrahim support group" and "Support Jamaluddin, support freedom of speech".

Pakatan leaders also jumped into the fray through Facebook or Twitter. DAP Selangor Speaker Teng Chang Khim twitted "OMG! Jamaluddin Ibrahim, widely known as Jiama, popular DJ on radio station FM988 owned by MCA is dropped from the famous call-in programme."

However, Internet surfers are divided over the issue. On one hand, some blame the BN government and MCA president Chua Soi Lek, since Radio 988 is indirectly controlled by the party through an investment arm.

On the other, some suspect that today 's incident is self-created, with the hidden agenda to boost popularity. But Jamaluddin waved off that allegation.

There are also those with with the view that no matter what "hidden agenda" was or whether Jamaluddin was right or wrong, a Chinese current affairs talk show that expands freedom of speech is rare in Malaysia, so the programme should be maintained

Hello Malaysia made its debut on May 4 last year. Originally it had three permanent hosts. including Jamaluddin.

NONEDuring last year's MCA internal power struggle, one of the hosts, Koh Kok Wee, was dropped. The allegation is that his frequent criticism of then MCA president Ong Tee Keat (right) caused his departure.

Jamaluddin had been supportive of Ong, frequently arguing with Koh on-air over the MCA and various issues. Since Chua Soi Lek took over as MCA president, rumours have been rife that a restructuring of the radio station's personnel is in the offing.

However, Chua was unavailable for comment today.

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