

Dong Zong wants Race Relations Act initiative revived
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In the midst of statements and counter-statements surrounding allegedly racist remarks by various figures and public officials, an influential Chinese association has called for the revival of efforts to put in place a race relations act to manage communal disputes.

djz dong jiao zong and chinese education 051005The United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia (Dong Zong) in a statement called for "all parties to work together to establish a race relationship act and reform the legal system".

"With a credibility legal system, we can efficiently handle race conflict cases in with justice," said the association.

The call comes on the heels of public outrage over reports in two separate incidents that school officials had allegedly uttered racial slurs against Chinese and Indian students.

Earlier this month, tempers were raised after a politician earlier this month warned the Chinese community of the adverse political, social and economic consequences when Muslims are in positions of leadership.

perkasa on najib 150810 ibrahim aliMost recently, Ibrahim Ali (left) of Malay rights group Perkasa described those who called for removal of the 30 percent bumiputera equity and the implementation of open tender policy as "ungrateful" and "greedy".

Commenting on the incidents at the schools, Dong Zong said it condemns the headmistress in Johor alleged to have made the "extremist racist remarks".

"We urge the government to take stern action to punish the headmistress. The government should also educate teachers and students towards having a better understanding of the different races, cultures, languages and religions," said the group.

"There are always some extremist racists in our society making racist remarks such as "Balik Cina", "Balik India" or "Pendatang".

"These racists do not hesitate to damage our harmonious ethnic relations in order to fulfill their selfish agenda," said Dong Zong.

syed hamid albar exclusive interview larger pix 231008 05It also called for the government should take stern action against all those who make racist remarks, instead of prosecuting offenders selectively while remaining indifferent to the provocations of such quarters as Utusan Malaysia.

In September last year, former home minister Syed Hamid Albar (right) announced the cabinet had approved a proposed Race Relations Act, which would be brought to Parliament as soon as its finer details were ironed out.

The matter was then passed to then-unity, culture, arts and heritage minister Shafie Apdal to collect the information needed for the act to be drafted and tabled in Parliament.

shafie apdal pc 310308 shafieFour months subsequently, however, Shafie said the government had decided not to pursue the proposed race relations law as there was no

need for it.

"Race relations is something that comes naturally and cannot be forced through legislation," Shafie (right) said.

In a related development, Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon today expressed his condemnation of the racist remarks that have been attributed to the school officials in Johor and Kedah.

"Like most people in this nation, I am highly disturbed by the incidents of these two principals making racist remarks.

gerakan press conference koh tsu koon 2

"Gerakan regrets this incident and that it should not have happened. These remarks should not have escaped the lips of an educator, what more (by) a principal of the school.

"It may give the wrong impression that racism is manifesting right in our education system," Koh (left), who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, told a press conference after chairing the party's central working committee meeting.

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