

**PM: We must have zero tolerance for racism**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**August 27, 2010**

Prime Minister Najib Razak has come out strongly to denounce racism, saying that the federal government should adopt the policy of zero tolerance on the issue, with special focus on those who try to incite racial hatred.

But when taking questions from the floor in a question-and-answer session, he attempted to calm emotional waves by urging the public not to be quick about apportioning blame.

"Sometimes what is interpreted by others may not also be the truth," he said at the Barisan Nasional Youth Lab townhall session in Kuala Lumpur this morning.

NONE Asked if civil servants found to make racist remarks would be sacked, the premier also remained non-committal.

"We need to have an educational process. It is still quite nascent (for the civil servants). But rest assured, those who make racist remarks, action will be taken," said Najib (left).

In the past two weeks, the country has been deeply divided over the incidents of school principals allegedly making racist remarks against their students.

While one Johor principal reportedly said that "Chinese students should go back to China", and likened the Hindu prayer string to a dog leash, another in Kedah had apparently ticked off non-Muslim students who were eating in the school canteen during Ramadan, telling them that they, too, should "go back to China".

NONE Many civil society groups as well as politicians from both sides of the divide had condemned the remarks, but at the same time, Facebook groups and fan pages have popped up in the social media in support of the principals.

Najib's deputy, and education minister, Muhyiddin Yassin has announced a task force to investigate the Johor incident while the Kedah principal had made a public apology.

All this while, Najib had maintained relative silence over the incidents.

Open to students in politics

Meanwhile, Najib dropped hints that the door is still open for discussions on the hot topic of student participation in politics.

"I know that the cabinet recently announced that they are maintaining the status quo, but I am still thinking about the idea of letting students participate in politics.

"I still have an open mind on it so we can still debate the pros and cons, so that we can in the end make an accurate decision," he said.

NONE However, he warned of the repercussions of students forgoing their studies in favour of political involvement.

"I want students to be excellent in their studies. But I don't want it to be abused, and they become too caught up in politicking," he said.

Earlier, BN Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar - also the Umno Youth chairperson - had presented the summary of a report which says that most youths polled are in favour of university students taking part in politics.

"Not all may be interested in joining political parties or anything like that, but most of the university students say that they at least want the choice and the freedom to participate in politics whenever they feel like it," he said.

Government to teach 'good habits'

Najib also spoke on inculcating "good habits" among Malaysians.

"Like the subsidy rationalisation of sugar. We have to teach Malaysians not to use too much sugar. Our obesity and diabetes rates are among the highest in the world, where 14 percent of our population have diabetes.

"It is an educational process but it will still be exploited for political interests.

"It is like the speed limit as well. We have about 6,000 deaths every year from road accidents. In five years, we can have enough dead bodies to fill Stadium Merdeka. So whether it is direct summonses or saman ekor, we have to nurture and inculcate good habits," he said.

Khairy, when wearing his Umno cap, had incidentally earlier campaigned to abolish saman ekor (summonses sent to the alleged offenders long after breaking traffic rules).

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