

Zaid: 1Malaysia ship in troubled waters
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The 1Malaysia ship is in troubled waters and only a few are helping the prime minister steer it to calmer seas, said Pakatan Rakyat coordinator Zaid Ibrahim.

"(Premier Najib Abdul Razak) spent a lot of money articulating 1Malaysia but when he talks about it who supports him? (Umno Youth chief) Khairy Jamaluddin? (Minister in the Prime Minister's Department) Nazri Aziz?" he asked, inviting chuckles from the audience.

NONEZaid (right), who was speaking at the UCSI University National Congress on Integrity in Kuala Lumpur today, added that other cabinet ministers have been relatively silent on the concept, while Umno too appears to have turned their backs on the PM.

"We have Utusan (going against Umno) and (former premier) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) opposing everything that other people talk about.

"And then we have (Malay rights NGO Perkasa president) Ibrahim Ali who says... actually I don't know what he says... but he arouses so much anger I don't know how he gets away with it," he said during a session on political culture and leadership for national unity.

Najib's apparent lack of support is making the prime minister skittish and "calculated" to the extent that he cannot talk about Perkasa, he said.

Similarly, the PM appears to be "blur about other issues", evident through his "touch and go" mention of the social contract recently.

Najib had said that getting rid of the said contract would harm unity.

"When leaders use concepts like these, I wonder if they themselves understand. They need to be clear, you cannot just say it without being able to explain it in simple terms," he said.

The notion of the social contract, he added, is especially contentious, with divergent views of whether it even exists, he said.

'Build bridges by allowing free speech'

Zaid said that a leader who believes in building bridges between people should not just try to build a "facade of unity" through displays of open houses, which actually attract people because of the free food.

Instead leaders should allow people to speak about what it means to live with each other without feeling fearful of being accused of "challenging this or that".

hannah yeoh interview 110608 03Subang state assemblyperson Hannah Yeoh (left) said that for this to happen, the rakyat must support leaders who take bold but difficult decisions.

Similarly, she said people should make a statement of rejecting the likes of Ibrahim Ali by not acting the same way behind closed doors.

"If you say you don't like Ibrahim Ali then don't be an Ibrahim Ali at home.

"He is only brave enough to speak like this because he knows there are many around who are like him," she said.

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