

PM moves to halt racial debates
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Umno president Najib Razak today moved to stop divisive racial debates and reassured party faithful that the constitutional position of the Malays cannot be changed without the approval of the Malay rulers.

He warned that if the debates go unabated, it could let loose primordial instincts, which if badly managed, can unleash "large-scale acts of cruelty" as shown by history.

"What I am saying is not surprising. In the 20th century, we have seen cases of lynching in the United States, the holocaust tragedy in Europe, the slaughter of Palestinians in the Middle East and the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Rwanda.

"Imagine, what the outcome will be if every generation of Malaysians question the social contract which were agreed upon by their forefathers," said Najib in his opening speech at the 61st Umno general assembly in the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC).

Najib said that the Malays made the ultimate sacrifice when they allowed then Malaya to be shared with other races.

Based on the principle of *jus soli* (birthright citizenship), Najib said that the country was founded upon a social contract where the forefathers of non-Malays had accepted the special position of Malays under Article 153 of the constitution.

"Malaysian citizenship, at its very core, was not based on equality but it was made to fit the reality (of the country's) long-term goals and interests," he said.

A contract cannot be reneged

Since this was agreed in a social contract by the founding founders of the nation, Najib said that the contract cannot be reneged.

Adopting a business analogy, he said if either party breaks the terms of the contract, no one would trust each other anymore.

In a rare admission, Najib argued that racial debates, particularly on post-independence citizenship and the special position of the Malays, were academic.

He said that the constitution outlines citizenship rights as well as the special position of the Malays, which according to Article 159, cannot be amended without the consent of the Malay rulers.

"Even with a two-thirds majority in Parliament, it cannot be changed without the permission from the Council of Rulers comprising nine Malay rulers.

"In other words, it would be pointless to quarrel and use this provision on citizenship to threaten the other races because the provision enshrined is so concrete even if an emergency were to be declared, it still cannot be touched," he said.



**Umno 2010
general assembly**

Sept 19, Tuesday

8pm Simultaneous opening of Wanita, Youth and Puteri wings by deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin

Sept 20, Wednesday

8.30am Wanita, Youth and Puteri wings meet separately in Putra World Trade Centre

Sept 21, Thursday

8am Day 1 - Umno AGM to be opened by party president Najib Razak

Sept 22, Friday

8.30am Day 2 - Debate on resolutions

Sept 23, Saturday

8.30am Day 3 - Top Umno leaders to give winding-up speeches. Najib to close conference

Azlan Zamhari / Malaysiakini

been snipping at the failure to protect

No faults with

39 years of pointing out that the largest share of

claim that brought problems, otherwise.

"In reality, it is that help, the implementation of the affirmative action that become the cause of problems," he said.

He argued that such safeguards, through the Malay rulers, on these constitutional provisions were designed to place the issue "outside the realm of discussion".

In arguing that the issue of Malays special position as academic, Najib hoped to take the wind out of Perkasa's sails. The right-wing group, whose members overlap with Umno, has party in recent months for its Malay rights.

affirmative action
At the same time, Najib defended affirmative action for the Malays, non-bumiputeras are still holding the nation's wealth. "We realise that certain quarters affirmative action itself had but empirical evidence shows

attitude of those who receive

When delivering his speech with the theme 'Empowering the race to lead prosperity', Najib pointed out that efforts by certain groups to question the special position of the Malays, had clearly caused uneasiness and dissatisfaction towards the Malays who are noted for their accommodating attitude.

"This feeling of discontentment has begun to spread and may destroy the racial harmony which we have nurtured for so long," he lamented.

Najib also gave the 5,000-odd party delegates in PWTC's Dewan Merdeka a history lesson.

They were asked to ponder on the defeat of the Malaccan empire by the Portugese 500 years ago, and take heed of the huge disparity in armament used by both armies.

"The Portugese had modern weapons for its time, with guns and cannons, while the Malaccan defence was past its time. Even though the keris, shields and spears are the symbols of the warrior, it was no match," he said.

He said in the modern context, Najib said the Malays must train themselves to be competitive internationally and adopt a "glocal" outlook.

Najib said that the Malays, as the majority race in Malaysia, has the responsibility to lead the country and as such, changes must be made.

