

**Field Indian candidate for Ijok, PKR told
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Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) should field an Indian candidate for the upcoming Ijok by-election to prove that it is truly multiracial, said former party member P Uthayakumar today.

If this does not happen, he said, Ijok will be another by-election in which the Indians have been played out by PKR and other opposition parties.

Uthayakumar is currently the pro-tem secretary-general of splinter group Parti Reformasi Insan Malaysia (Prim).

The Ijok seat, which has a sizeable number of Indian voters, became vacant following the death of MIC assemblyperson K Sivalingham last Wednesday.

Yesterday, PKR Selangor chief Khalid Ibrahim said as a multiracial party, PKR is not duty bound to field an Indian candidate.

However, Uthayakumar was not convinced by this explanation.

"If this is true, then why in the past general elections and by-elections, this has not been reflected in the fielding of Indian candidates in Chinese-or Malay-majority constituencies?" he asked when contacted.

He said this pattern of marginalisation was evident in the by-elections of Teluk Kemang, Lunas, Indera Kayang, Karak and Machap, as well as the 1999 and 2004 general elections.

Raw deal better than no deal

As a result of this 'racist policy' in PKR and other opposition parties, he said there is not a single Indian opposition member in any state assembly and a negligible number in Parliament.

On the other hand, he pointed out that MIC has nine MPs and 20 state assemblypersons.

"If the Indians in Barisan Nasional have gotten a raw deal, in PKR, DAP and PAS, they have gotten no deal at all," he said.

Meanwhile, Uthayakumar also posted an open letter to PKR advisor Anwar Ibrahim on the website of the Police Watch And Human Rights Committee.

In the letter, Uthayakumar, who is the committee's legal advisor, said the party should not marginalise Indian candidates.

"We appeal to your goodself to not only preach multi-racialism but to also be seen to be multiracial and put into practice multi-racialism," read the letter.

According to a source, Uthayakumar has been suggested as a possible PKR candidate for

the by-election.

However, Uthayakumar and PKR information chief Tian Chua declined to confirm or deny this.

"We are keeping our options open," Chua said when quizzed on the matter.

Meanwhile, Uthayakumar, in his open letter, urged the PKR leadership to consider fielding its vice youth chief S Manickavasagam (left) for the by-election.

He said Manickavasagam has been very active in the struggle for justice for the Indian community.

If Manickavasagam has any shortcomings, Uthayakumar said sarcastically that these are: "not playing tennis, not a Malay Tan Sri or Datuk or a blind follower of PKR."

This was an obvious reference to businessman KS Nallakaruppan and Khalid.

Nallakaruppan was Anwar's former tennis partner who joined PKR last year and is being touted as a possible candidate for Ijok. Whereas Khalid bears the honorific title 'Tan Sri' and is also said to be a possible candidate.

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