

MCA: Why downtrend in non-Malay recruits?
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The Chinese community had served the armed forces in large numbers before and the government must evaluate the actual reasons for the downtrend in Chinese recruits, said MCA publicity deputy chairperson Loh Seng Kok.

malaysiakini interview loh seng kok 061108 04Loh (left) said that history had shown that the Chinese community's patriotism should not be questioned because they had served the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), anti-Communist forces and the armed forces in numbers.

Citing Department of Defence statistics from 1971, Loh points out that non-Malays made up almost 50 percent of officers in the army (in all regiments/corps other than the Royal Malay Regiment), navy and air force.

He emphasised that a large numbers of Chinese had also joined the fight against the communist insurgency.

"In response to MCA's initiative, many Malayan Chinese had in one way or another, voluntarily formed and joined the Home Guard in order to protect the security and stability of the country.

"They had contributed selflessly to the country by resolutely protecting the country's interest from all threats," said Loh.

Patriotism not in question

Given this background, Loh hoped that Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi would not jump to conclusion that the low number of non-Malay recruits today was due to lack of patriotism among non-Malays.

military tentera askar soldier malaysia 260307 wataniah"I would like to add that besides showing one's patriotism by joining the armed forces, the non-Malays have also contributed greatly in order fields such as nation building activities and the economic growth of the country.

"Therefore, I hope that the defence minister can refine his definition of the word 'patriotic' and to carefully check the historical accounts of the country before jumping to conclusions.

"Doing so might be harmful to the mutual trust and relationship that has been fostered between all races for a long time now," he said.

Something wrong with the system?

Contacted for further comments, Loh urged the authorities to conduct a proper study on why recruitment of non-Malays is declining in numbers, not just in the armed forces, but also the civil service.

"Surely something must be wrong. Something is causing non-Malays to be less interested in joining the armed forces.

"Over the years, non-Malays in the civil service are declining in numbers as well. Why? Don't you think there are reasons or causes for this?"

"Maybe it is the experience of former non-Malay civil servants or the attitude, policies and working environment of the civil service."

"Has this contributed to the declining to the non-Malays joining the armed forces, civil service and the police force? Wouldn't you think so?" asked Loh.

Loh's statement was in reaction to a Zahid's statement in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday that the dismally low number of non-Malay recruits was because they lacked "patriotic spirit".

Zahid also claimed that non-Malays possibly feared tough military discipline, low pay compared to private jobs or did not receive encouragement from families.

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