

Ketuanan Melayu, in the words of Ibrahim Ali
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Perkasa president Ibrahim Ali today issued his first public statement, after suffering a heart ailment in mid-October, in which he defended the ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy) concept.

Strangely, Ibrahim chose to write his nine-paragraph statement in English instead of his usual style of curt, and often confrontational, text message statements in Bahasa Malaysia.

(A faxed copy of the statement received later this evening included a Bahasa Malaysia version.)

Ibrahim, who has been hogging the limelight throughout the year with his provocative comments on race issues, was responding to PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's speech calling for the abandonment of the ketuanan Melayu concept.

She argued that ketuanan Melayu was being abused by a small group of Malay elite while the Malay working class languished in economic doldrums.

In his statement, titled Man has history and without history man is nothing, Ibrahim said that ketuanan Melayu was a slogan coined to unite the Malays during the struggle for independence.

"The justification of ketuanan Melayu becomes the 'right' when it (is) further stipulated and enshrined in our constitution. Ketuanan Melayu was not just plucked out from the heavenly sky but had (been) demonstrated in the historical evolution of our nation.

NONE"Prior to the coming of the invaders, Persekutuan Tanah Melayu existed. It had the sovereign sultanate of Malay kingdoms, whose governments (represented) their territories.

"It developed the social, economic and cultural orders with strong and institutionalised fundamental values of Islam.

"Above all, the Malay norms practised in the customary laws strengthen the 'rights' that the Malays and the bumiputra are the tuan (masters) of their Tanah Melayu. Unfortunately, the slogan is understood by some as 'tuan and servant' relationship," Ibrahim said.

No need to be apologetic

Given the historic position of the Malay race in Malaysia, Ibrahim argued that Malays must not be apologetic about ketuanan Melayu, nor should this be considered a sign of Malay weakness.

"We must prescribe (to) the notion and the spirit of ketuanan Melayu (is) for us to move forward for the order of change and achieving progress with dignity in all arenas .

"We have a CAUSE and our CAUSE is justified because it is our Tanah Melayu (sic)," he said.

Ibrahim also argued that the ketuanan Melayu concept was institutionalised through the inclusion of Articles 152 and 153 in the Federal Constitution.

He said that this was done by the nation's founding fathers to ensure that Malays would not suffer the same fate as the North American natives.

However, the rights of other ethnic groups were also recognised in the Federal Constitution due to Malay "tolerance and acceptance".

But, in explaining how non-Malay migrants were brought in to then Malaya by the British colonialist, Ibrahim said flatly: "They were not welcomed".

Ibrahim, who is also the Pasir Mas MP, has been out of action since Oct 16. He underwent a two-hour heart surgery on Nov 18 and his recovery is believed to be smooth.

Who, really, are the 'Malays'?

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