

'Umno cowards for dragging royals into ketuanan row'

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PKR says that Umno equating the reformist party's criticism of ketuanan Melayu (Malay supremacy) to an attack on the Malay rulers, is an "act of cowardice".

PKR congress pc 271110 saifuddin nasutionPKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution (left) said that this was a desperate attempt by Umno and its sympathisers such as Malay rights pressure group Perkasa, to divert attention from the crux of PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's speech, where she called for the ketuanan Melayu concept to be scrapped.

He said Wan Azizah's speech had pointed out that ketuanan Melayu had failed to create a pious, independent, principled and competitive Malay race.

Saifuddin said that by dragging in the Malay Rulers to the debate over ketuanan Melayu, Umno and Perkasa had brought the royals into disrepute because they were supposed to be apolitical.

"Umno and Perkasa's action to drag the royal institution (into the debate) by equating ketuanan Melayu with ketuanan Sultan is an act of cowardice.

"They are incapable of answering pressing questions, such as those raised by PKR, on the debate over the best ways to protect Malay interests," he said in a statement today.

Umno's attacks on the rulers forgotten?

Saifuddin, himself a former Umno Youth secretary in the late 1990s, reminded Umno that the latter had insulted the royal institutions on several past occasions, for example when they reduced the royalty's powers in 1983 and 1993.

"In both constitutional crises orchestrated by Umno, the newspapers and media organisations owned by them had attacked and embarrassed the Malay rulers.

"There is a big difference between one or two people questioning the Malay rulers and a large-scale organised movement by a political party, who claims to promote ketuanan Melayu," he said.

Saifuddin said that it was time Umno and Perkasa stopped slandering PKR and Pakatan Rakyat with accusations that the opposition coalition was against Malay interests.

He pointed out that Pakatan's Common Policy Framework (CPF) clearly states that the coalition will defend Islam as the country's official religion and protect the rights of the Malays and other indigenous groups.

Umno on the other hand, said Saifuddin, was flogging the ketuanan Melayu issue to create fear amongst the Malays and suspicion against the other races.

"Will this succeed in creating a Malay race that has dignity?" he asked.

"Will Malays who grow up with suspicion (against other races) take positive measures to face the wave of globalisation and become international leaders?"

Ketuanan Rakyat trumps ketuanan Melayu

"The question raised by PKR is a question of resilience, and the best way to train this resilience.

"Umno's ketuanan Melayu not only failed to make Malays resilient but also ignored the welfare of the Malays," said Saifuddin.

"After three decades of ketuanan Melayu, 75 percent of households with an income of below RM2,000 are Malays. This group also make up 40 percent of the poorest in Malaysia, as said by the Prime Minister himself in the 10th Malaysia Plan," he said.

Saifuddin concluded that ketuanan Melayu is Umno and Perkasa's last refuge, but warned that it is becoming extremely fragile and unpopular with the populace.

"For the sake of creating a Malaysia that is plural, tolerant and competitive, PKR remains consistent with its 'ketuanan rakyat' (the people's supremacy) movement to create a dignified race.

"We are confident that Umno and Perkasa have no answer for this," he said.

Wan Azizah's speech during the officiation of the seventh PKR congress last weekend had provoked a tireless barrage of daily criticism from Umno and other ketuanan Melayu sympathisers.

PKR however found an ally in former Perlis Mufti Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin, who weighed in that ketuanan Melayu was not only un-Islamic, but was akin to the oft-maligned Jewish claim of a "chosen race".