

**Engage civil society, Indian community told**  
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**Azreen Madzlan**

A grouping involving 128 organisations today urged the Indian community to stop relying on the MIC and start engaging the civil society to help them elevate their status. MCPX

The grouping - called Coalition of Malaysian NGOs (CMIO) - said it was time for a new inclusive political model to represent the Indian-Malaysian community.

The coalition said this could be achieved by moving away from the ethnic-based politics and built direct dialogues and consultative process between the policy-makers and the community, and offered itself to play that role effectively.

indian ngo civil society pc 110308 arumugamcoAccording to the coalition's co-chairperson K Arumugam, the results from the recently concluded general election have provided the opportunity for all Malaysians, not just the ethnic Indians, to move away from conflict-ridden communal-based politics.

"We need a cohesive unit to present itself to federal, state and local government. We do not want to go back to arguments through race-based political party system" he said.

Arumugam said that the new change in mind set was needed in the Indian community to move away from believing that only MIC can get things done for them.

He added that a change was essential now especially with the heavy losses suffered by MIC in the general election.

MIC has for long claimed to be the sole Indian representative in the government, stating that only it can elevate the status of the community by seeking government aide.

Arumugam said that it was important to educate the Indian community on how to move towards getting the civil society to be more involved because the process will be different as people were used to the old system.

He also acknowledged that it will be a challenging task for the civil society to fill the vacuum left by the MIC.

"MIC hardly dealt with major issues. They are supposed to, but they failed. So we take upon ourselves for the responsibilities," he said.

**Say no to the MIC system**

He added that it was important that the new elected representatives from opposition parties speak for all Malaysians and not fall into the racial factor as practised by the BN.

"Indian-Malaysians should have access to all policy-making institutions to reassure the community that its genuine grievances will be addressed speedily and effectively, and done as a national and not merely as a communal concern." he said.

indian ngo civil society pc 110308 repArumugam also said that the coalition will hold dialogues and debates with state governments and experts from the community soon to get a better understanding on how to solve the community's problems.

"We will create watchdogs for monitoring and evaluating Barisan Nasional and the opposition representatives, and will report back to the community," he said.

Research director of Educational, Welfare and Research Foundation Malaysia S Nagarajan also agreed that it has become unnecessary to continue to believe that only Indian parliamentarians can represent the community.

When met by Malaysiakini after the press conference, Nagarajan said such a belief will only revert to the "same old MIC system".

He also said that main issues concerning the Indian community, such as the demolition of Hindu temples and other forms of alleged discrimination, should be taken up as national issues by the government.

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