

Hindraf seeks UN help to address Indian issues
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 22, 2008
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The Hindu Rights Action Force is urging the United Nations to appoint a special rapporteur to specifically look into the plight of the Indian community in Malaysia. MCPX

hindraf waythamoorthy united nations un 220408 02The request was made by Hindraf chairperson P Waythamoorthy in a letter written to the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights which is based in Geneva, Switzerland on April 17.

"The Malaysian ethnic Indian has no other choice but to seek redress and solutions at the doorsteps of the United Nations," he said in the letter, a copy of which was made available to Malaysiakini.

"On behalf of all those oppressed, suppressed and marginalised ethnic Indian community I formally request that you exercise all powers conferred upon you to appoint a Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Affecting the community," he added.

In his letter, Waythamoorthy - presently based in London following a government crackdown on Hindraf leaders - gave examples of various issues in which the members of the community were sidelined as a result of government policies.

"The majority Indian community who belonged to the plantation sectors become internally displaced persons when their traditional plantation land is acquired by government for purposes of development and their very social living lifestyle are disrupted.

"They are not provided adequate compensation for their contributions for the country's economy over the last 200 years, not provided new job opportunities and training programs.

"No permanent alternative is given to resolve their housing problems and ultimately they end up as squatters in urban and remain poor, underclass and neglected.

"When their plantation land is taken they lose their land, houses, temples, schools and end up a new poor class neglected society," he said in his letter.

UN's fact-finding mission

hindraf waythamoorthy united nations un 220408 01Waythamoorthy also told Malaysiakini that he was invited to make a presentation on the conditions of the Malaysian Indians at the United Nations Human Rights commission in Geneva on April 17.

"The meeting served as an eye opener to the United Nations Human Rights council. It was the first time serious human rights violations on Malaysia was presented," he said.

He said that he was given as assurance by the world body that it would seek an explanation from the Malaysian government.

"They also said they would request an invitation from Malaysia to visit for purposes of fact-finding on the issues raised," he said.

Hindraf became prominent after raising various issues pertaining to the Indian community in this country. On Nov 25, it organised a mass rally in Kuala Lumpur in which about 30,000 people took part to show their anger against the government for failing to uplift the community.

Following that five top Hindraf leaders, including Waythamoorthy's brother Uthayakumar, were detained under the Internal Security Act for two years for allegedly being a national threat.

Waythamoorthy left the country to India, and then to the United Kingdom, to canvass international support for Hindraf's cause.

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