

Aborted forum : Anwar must put his foot down
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Elsie

I refer to the Malaysiakini
MCPX
report Protesters stop Bar's 'conversion' forum.

It distresses me to read about how a group of people disrupted a peaceful forum on 'Conversion to Islam' organised by the Bar Council.

This forum was very much necessary to articulate the fears and frustrations of non-Muslims about how conversion to Islam by some partners left them feeling very shortchanged.

And to chide the Bar Council to not to 'play with fire' by organising such an event is to sweep issues affecting non-Muslims under the carpet. To deny that fears exist among non-Muslims are not going to build a peaceful and united Malaysia.

To claim that there is unity when it is actually superficial in Malaysia is, to put it bluntly, syok sendiri.

Why is it that when a forum, organised to explain to Muslims the feelings and frustrations of non-Muslims, can be deemed to be 'Islam-bashing'? There is scant, if any, consideration to the feelings of non-Muslims.

And to tell the Indians and the Chinese to 'go to hell' speaks of the minds of those disruptive elements who claim to be Muslims.

It further distresses me to read that the leaders of these elements are from PKR and PAS. On one hand, they tell non-Muslims that they are there to ensure justice for all. On another, they disrupt peaceful forums.

Whatever happened to their promises to allow peaceful discussions? To claim victory when the forum was cut short goes against the grain of Pakatan Rakyat's message to the Malaysian electorate.

Even though they claim not to represent PKR or PAS in their actions, how can we ever trust them again when during election campaigns, they tell non-Muslims that they are there for everyone?

No, Anwar Ibrahim as leader of Pakatan Rakyat must put his foot down. Is Anwar willing to allow non-Muslims to have a peaceful forum or is he going to be silent about it? There are no two ways about it.

Either he takes disciplinary action against the elements who are PKR members and chide PAS for disrupting the forum, or he must be prepared for the Malaysian people to doubt his sincerity to bring about a peaceful and just change to Malaysia.

The fruits of a religion are borne by the practitioners of the religion themselves. Whether a religion is tolerant or not, is peaceful or not, is reflected by the practices of its followers.

I am glad to read of how Dr Mehrun Siraj, a Muslim herself, rebuked the 'Muslim' protester by telling him not to insult Islam. The forum was not to 'bash Islam'.

If there was any 'Islam- bashing', it was done by those protesters who disrupted a peaceful forum and who insulted the peaceful religion of Islam with their uncivilised behaviour.

Comprising 60 percent of the population, non-Muslims are part and parcel of Malaysia. The majority of them do not know of any other country other than Malaysia.

To them, Malaysia is where they will live and die in defence of. No one is out to 'bash Islam'. All they ask is for the Muslims to please understand their legitimate fears. Is this too much to ask for?

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