

Gerakan pushes for anti-hate code for BN
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Gerakan acting president Dr Koh Tsu Koon will be pushing for a Barisan Nasional code of conduct with an effective disciplinary mechanism at the next coalition meeting to deter racist remarks and to discipline offenders.

In the wake of racist remarks made by Bukit Bendera Umno division chief Ahmad Ismail during the Permatang Pauh by-election campaign recently, Koh said that the code of conduct is needed to avoid anti-social behaviour which would jeopardise national unity and BN solidarity.

Ahmad upset the Chinese community with his campaign speech - claiming local Chinese were only "squatters" therefore ineligible for equality.

"Although it may be argued that his remark was only his personal view and not Umno's stand, it has definitely tarnished the image of Umno and BN," added Koh in a statement today.

He characterised the top party leaders as not being fast and firm enough in dealing with the situation. However, he welcomed the Deputy Prime Minister and Umno Deputy President Najib Abdul Razak's apology on behalf on Umno.

"Najib's sincerity has helped to ease somewhat the anger and tension arising out of Ahmad Ismail's insulting racist remark," said Koh.

Milk pots

Even with a code of conduct, Koh stressed that the Sedition Act and other laws have to be applied if the remark or behaviour was grievous enough.

"Any act that threatens national unity and inter-racial or inter-religious harmony must be dealt with very sternly," he added.

Disciplinary actions permissible under the code of conduct have to be applied immediately whenever the need arises to avoid adverse chain reactions - leading to worse conflicts.

Koh used a Malay proverb to summarise the Ahmad Ismail episode : 'nila setitik, rosak susu sebelanga,' (a drop of blue dye spoils a pot of milk).

" BN may have many pots of milk because of the good work and goodwill BN has achieved and accumulated through over 50 years of nation building with the people.

"However, if too many drops of blue dye continue to be sprayed, all of BN's pots of milk will eventually be spoilt. We may be reaching such a critical point of no return now," he added.

Meanwhile Ahmad has been called up by the police for questioning today. At least five police reports were lodged against him over his remarks.