

## **Zero tolerance for racism or zero action?**

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COMMENT It is nearly a month since the controversial racist remarks allegedly made by Johor school principal Siti Inshah Mansor on 12 August 2010 was highlighted in the media, but no action has so far been taken on the case.

On the contrary, the case involving 27-year-old rapper Wee Meng Chee, popularly known as Namewee, who last week uploaded a video titled "Nah" on YouTube criticizing Siti Inshah's alleged racist remarks uttered against students, was investigated straight away by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), which questioned him for more than seven hours.

It was reported that the police also went to Meng Chee's house in Muar 15 minutes before midnight on the eve of the 53rd Merdeka celebration, leading him to post this message on his Facebook: "3 POLICE CARS FINALLY CAME TO MY MUAR HOME TO ARREST ME\*\*\*\*\* this happened 15 minutes before our 53rd National Day Celebration. YES, I'm still here but for how long more, I don't know ... my beloved MALAYSIA, where is our justice system?! (THIS IS NOT A JOKE)".

Federal CID chief Bakri Zinin has also confirmed that Meng Chee was being investigated under the Sedition Act.

DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang wants to know why the police are investigating Meng Chee for sedition when there is nothing seditious in his three-minute rap against the Kulai secondary school principal for making racist slurs against students while the school principal is still scot-free for her seditious racism.

Siti Inshah's case concerns her remarks likening Indian students wearing prayer threads to dogs, and ordered dissatisfied ethnic Chinese and Indian students to "return to China or India".

Her remarks sparked a nationwide public furor and drew calls for her to be sacked. Several police reports were lodged against her, but despite setting up a task force to probe the allegations, Deputy Prime Minister cum Education Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has so far stonewalled on taking any action.

She had reportedly made the derogatory remarks during the launch of the school's Merdeka celebrations on Thursday 12 August 2010.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak had recently declared that there should be "zero tolerance for racism", yet there has been no concrete action taken against the racists and extremists, some within the ranks of his own party, who are making his 1-Malaysia concept into a worthless slogan, and causing him to be held in contempt by the people.

The unremitting incessant racist comments by the mercenary newspaper columnists and the igneous rhetoric of the ardent and fervid racist politicians promoting the supremacy of one particular race are creating an atmosphere of dread and fear among the people.

The chorus of protests and condemnation against such racist propaganda seems to have fallen on the deaf ears of the power-that-be, with no vocal and visible actions being taken to curb the racist politicians and civil servants.

For example, in the Siti Inshah case, Education director-general Alimuddin Mohd Dom trivialized the whole serious matter as simply a "misunderstanding", instead of viewing her racist remarks as something that hurt the feelings of others, jeopardizing the peace, harmony and unity of the nation.

Alimuddin's thoughtless dismissal of the grave scenario exposes him as being incapable and incompetent in understanding the severity and gravity of the consequences of such damaging remarks, which could destroy the peaceful co-existence of our multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual nation.

The Najib administration has a duty and accountability to take fast and hard actions against those who fan the racial fire, threatening the peace and harmony of the nation, and creating disunity among the people.

First of all, Najib and his ministers cannot keep silent in the face of such racist rhetoric and racial power play among the nefarious politicians, especially those promoting the supremacy and superiority of any particular race.

Najib wants to create a 1-Malaysia community, but it is surely obvious that his ideal has not been filtering down to the people, with several extremist rights groups going all out to create disharmony.

Over the last one year or so, the dubious and shady characters of certain rights groups have been going around disparaging the non-Malays calling them "immigrants" or "passengers", and asking them to leave the country. There was also the so-called cow-head protest, and the arson attacks on places of worship.

There were also acts of sabotage against a duly elected state government by creating problems and scandals with racial or religious overtones, such as the doctored picture of Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

Secondly, the Najib administration must go all out to rein in the unscrupulous malevolent elements in positions of power in the civil service and weed them out to preserve and protect the harmony, peace and unity of the nation.

Fast disciplinary and legal actions must be instituted against those who cast aspersion and obloquy on people of other races, like the school head who made racial slur against the non-Malays, and the police officer who told a snatch theft victim to "go back to China" when she couldn't speak proper Bahasa Malaysia while making a police report.

Thirdly, the Najib administration should heed the proposal by DAP national chairman Karpal Singh to enact a Race Relations Act as a deterrent to prevent further racist remarks from being uttered by irresponsible individuals.

I believe that such a legislation would contribute much to enhance race relationship in Malaysia. I suggest that the following objectives be used as guiding principles for such a legislation:

(a) To promote greater integration and better relations among people of the various races and ethnic groups.

(b) To eradicate racial discrimination, harassment and abuses.

(c) To promote racial equality in the civil service, and education institutions.

(d) To support private sector employers to ensure equality of opportunity and good race relations.

(e) To increase public awareness of racial discrimination and injustice through education and the information media.

(f) To win the hearts and minds of the people and unite them to create a just, fair and equal society.

If Prime Minister Najib is truly serious and earnest about "zero tolerance for racism", then he must act positively and constructively in dealing with the increasingly intolerant racist insurgency that is gathering momentum and threatening the fragile and friable mosaic of our multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual nation.— MySinChew.com

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