

Zahid says no intention to hurt non-Malays' feelings
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KUALA LUMPUR - Defence Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said in Parliament Wednesday that he did not mean to hurt the feelings of non-Malays when he made insensitive statement about the non-Malays reluctance to join the army.

However, he did not apologize for his statement ignoring DAP MP for Ipoh Barat M. Kulasegaran who urged Zahid to issue an apology on the matter.

Zahid said he felt unfortunate if the answer he provided - that "a lack of patriotism" was a reason for the low number of non-Malay recruits in the armed forces - had hurt the feelings of any race.

"I did not mean to hurt the feelings of any race nor did I intend to question their patriotism," the Parliament heard from Zahid.

The defence minister added that history had shown many national heroes from the non-Malay community, including the Chinese, Indians, Kadazans and other groups, had helped to defend the country against the Communist in the 1960s.

"Many national heroes who fought against the British invaders and communist insurgency were (non-Malays)," he said.

Zahid had on Nov 9, in reply to Mohd Jidin Shafee (BN-Setiu) during question time, said: ""The ministry finds that the participation of the non-Malays, especially Chinese and Indian, in the armed forces is still low, perhaps because of their fear to the strict discipline, it is a less rewarding job compared with working in the private sector, no encouragement or support from family members and lack of patriotism."

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