

Grave Doubts Over Cabinet Sincerity On RCI Sabah
MalaysianMirror.com
24 July 2012
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Penampang is the sixth and last parliamentary constituency in my three-day tour of Sabah with DAP MP for Segambut Lim Lip Eng and Sabah DAP leaders which included Putatan, Sepanggar, Tuaran, Kota Belud and Tenom to feel the pulse of interior Sabah to the winds of political change blowing throughout the country since the political tsunami in the 2008 general election.

The inescapable impression and conclusion of our tour is that Sabahans, like their compatriots in the rest of Malaysia, are impatiently waiting for the 13th general election to see fundamental political and economic changes in the state and country.

Sabah has changed the state government four times in the past five decades but things have got from bad to worse for the people of Sabah whether on the increasingly grave issue of illegal immigrants in Sabah which have reduced the genuine sons and daughters of Sabah into foreigners and strangers in their own land in less than half a century, crime, corruption, poverty or just basic socio-economic amenities and infrastructures for the people of Sabah.

The political lesson is very clear - without political change in Putrajaya at the national level, it is very difficult to effect meaningful changes at the state level. This is why Sabah DAP has coined the slogan: "Save Sabah Save Malaysia", as firstly, Sabah cannot be saved without saving Malaysia; and secondly, if Malaysia is to be saved, Sabah must also be saved.

In February the Cabinet finally succumbed to decades of pressure - which included incessant calls by the DAP inside and outside Parliament - and decided to form a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) to address the long-standing sore problem of illegal immigrants in Sabah.

However the Cabinet decision made double but dubious history both inside the country and internationally.

I do not think there is another Cabinet decision in the 54-year history of the nation which has commanded lower public esteem, trust and credibility.

If an opinion poll is conducted in Sabah, the overwhelming majority of the people would have given the opinion that the Barisan Nasional is not serious in wanting to resolve and root out the problem of illegal immigrants in Sabah but only to give the false impression that something is being done to address the problem in order to lure Sabah votes in the "fixed deposit" state in the next general election.

The Cabinet has also made international history in being the only nation in the world in deciding on a RCI whose terms of reference and composition of membership could still not be announced after almost six months - as if the RCI is still-born! This is most dishonourable and disgraceful.

But should anyone particularly in Sabah be surprised by such indifferent, nonchalant and dishonest treatment of the illegal immigrant problem by Barisan Nasional considering the history of UMNO on the issue, particularly the disgraceful episode of Project Mahathir in the early nineties?

In this connection, the recent statement of a top Special Branch officer had cast grave doubts on the sincerity of the Cabinet when it took the decision in February to set up a RCI on illegal immigrants in Sabah.

This top Special Branch officer is none other than the notorious assistant director of the E2 (M) national social extremist threat division head Mohd Sofian Mohd Makin who made the wild, baseless and reckless allegation that the Pakatan Rakyat was being infiltrated by Jemaah Islamiah (JI) terrorists in the case of PAS and by communist in the case of DAP – and have not been able to come out with any iota of evidence when challenged to do so.

Sofian has told the press that the advocates of RCI on illegal immigrants in Sabah are anti-national elements who only want to extract political capital from the issue, undermine diplomatic relations between Malaysia and the Philippines and incite anti-peninsular sentiments among Sabahans.

The Prime Minister Najib Razak should declare whether Sofian represents the secret but mainstream and official thinking of the UMNO/BN Federal government on the issue of RCI on illegal immigrants in Sabah, and if not, whether immediate action would be taken to suspend and discipline Sofian as he has become the worst example of a "national social extremist threat" his division in the Special Branch is supposed to be monitoring.

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