

'Ministers should have raised it in the Cabinet'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Improper.

That one word describes what Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi thought about the move by nine ministers to submit a memorandum to him.

The Prime Minister said any dissatisfaction should have been raised at the Cabinet meeting.

"But since the ministers sent the memorandum to me and not to the Cabinet, I will look at it. If it is necessary, I will bring it up at the Cabinet meeting."

Abdullah said he received the memorandum after the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday from Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting.

"When he gave the memorandum to me I said 'Ok, lah.' I did not say 'Saya tak mau ini.' (I do not want this)," he said.

"But I have not read it yet. I have been very busy with the preparation of the Ninth Malaysia Plan," he said after a book launch at the National Archives here.

The *New Straits Times* today reported that nine of the 10 non-Muslim ministers had submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister calling for a review of laws affecting the rights of non-Muslims.

"I don't know why they chose to submit the memorandum. But they did so collectively."

He reminded Malaysians that everything had to be done in moderation.



HAPPY OCCASION: Abdullah being greeted by national laureate A. Samad Said (right) at the National Archives in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — Bernama picture

"We have to contain our emotions and bear in mind that we are a multi-racial country. We cannot be sensitive to issues or make statements related to race or religion. How we react to situations and what we say is important."

He said the emphasis should be on exchange of ideas, rather than confrontation.

"We have to give importance to the *muhibbah* spirit and respect each other's race and religion," he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak

said that the memorandum was improper.

He urged the public to let Abdullah resolve the matter without pressure. He said that the ministers who submitted the memorandum should have discussed the matter at the Cabinet level.

"This has not happened before. It is unwise," he said.

Datuk Peter Chin, one of the ministers who signed the memorandum, said the act was done in good faith. "We are all for unity and tolerance," he said.

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