

# Hisham hits out at NUTP

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## 'Union making general statements'

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein has hit out at the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) for making general statements that adversely affect the reputation of the profession.

Responding to the union's recent complaint of teachers being recalled during the school holidays, Hishammuddin said that the NUTP should have been more specific by providing the names of the teachers and schools.

"Don't make general statements that the union received complaints through SMS," he said after attending a convocation of J-Qaf (Jawi, Quran, Arabic and Fardhu'Ain) graduates here yesterday.

"If there are any specific cases, by all means pass them to us.

"What they (NUTP) may have done is to give the impression to the public that teachers do not want to teach with passion.

"The NUTP is not doing the profession any good

The NUTP had called for a press conference last Monday

to address the issue of teachers being recalled during the current school holidays. The union said it had received complaints and expressed concern that recalling teachers during the year-end school holidays might become a trend.

Hishammuddin added that much had been done to strengthen the teaching profession over the past two years, including improving the ratio of teachers to classes.

"These are all fought by me and my colleagues. They have nothing to do with the NUTP. The union picks on issues that are sometimes general in nature ... at the end of the day, it taxes the morale of those in the profession," he said.

"I would like to ask what the NUTP has done over the past two years. I want to hear NUTP's suggestions on how to strengthen the profession and help change some people's perception that teaching is the last choice of career."

When contacted, NUTP president Ismail Nihat said the union's role was to help improve the status of teachers and to fight for their welfare.

"We organise professional

activities to improve the quality of teachers. We also disseminate information regarding government policies and programmes," he said.

NUTP secretary-general Lok Yim Pheng said they had always regarded the minister as the "father" of the teaching profession and believed that when the "children" had problems, he should look into them.

"We agree that teachers should have the passion for teaching. We want quality teachers and quality education too. We are sad that we are being criticised despite our efforts," she said.

On another matter, Hishammuddin said interaction between schools of different streams would be among the issues addressed in the education blueprint to be launched on Jan 12.

"We are going to be realistic about the allocations that have been given to the ministry," he said.

"We are also going to look at basic factors such as values, national integration and ways of bridging schools of different streams. The work is ongoing, difficult and exhaustive."