

# REVIEW CABINET LINE-UP CALL

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## Non-performers must go after heavy flak over floods, experts urge PM

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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob has been urged to review his cabinet line-up by removing non-performing members following the onslaught of grave criticisms against some of the leaders in the aftermath of the recent floods.

Political experts and observers, who are making the call, believe that keeping the “non-performers” could only drag the prime minister’s good image and all the good work that he has done so far.

The calls were particularly heating up on social media, where party members from Umno and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia have openly urged Ismail Sabri to sack cabinet members who have failed the people in their time of need.

They said response from some leaders have been defensive and dismissive in defending the slow response for search-and-rescue efforts and lack of preparedness despite early warning from the Meteorological Department (Met Malaysia).

A Perikatan Nasional (PN) leader, who wanted to remain anonymous, told the *New Straits Times* that grassroots members in the coalition were calling for ministers from the pact to be removed.

“It is embarrassing for us because the non-performing ministers actually came from our side (PN). It is as if we don’t have capable people to offer to Ismail Sabri to be part of his cabinet.”

The leader specifically named three ministers for their failure in executing their duties during the flood crisis.

“And, yet, have we sent any new names for Ismail Sabri to choose to replace the non-performing ministers? No.

“I believe it’s time for Ismail Sabri to put his foot down and take charge of the situation. As the prime minister, it is his prerogative to shape his own cabinet and not be held ransom by certain party leaders who have been sending subtle warnings that they would withdraw their sup-

port from the government,” the leader said.

He said the three ministers whom he believed had failed in their duties were recently under fire for their alleged slow response and lack of empathy when going to the ground meeting flood victims.

On Dec 19, one minister held a grand event with huge digital billboards in conjunction with the launch of the ministry’s squad of flood volunteers, at a time when flood victims across the country were wading in chest-deep floodwaters waiting for help to arrive.

The next day, a poster showing another minister’s planned dinner banquet to help flood victims at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur on Dec 21 went viral. The minister was also mocked for her alleged error in choosing the right footwear while visiting flood victims, which was recorded on video posted on the minister’s Facebook page.

The National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma), under the Prime Minister’s Department (Special Functions), was also heavily criticised during the flood crisis. When reports surfaced quoting a minister that Nadma was not directly involved

in dealing with natural disasters such as floods at the state level, as it was largely responsible for providing compensation after being provided information by relevant state authorities, all hell broke loose.

Although the political threat to pull support from the government could pose a dilemma for Ismail Sabri, since the country could not afford to go for a general election any time soon, National Professors Council senior fellow Dr Jeniri Amir believed that keeping a good image was paramount.

Jeniri said with the 90 per cent Key Performance Index (KPI) score given to his cabinet members, it was important for the ministers to be able to hold up to the expectations and not see the glowing scorecards go down the drain.

“The people are now doubting the 90 per cent KPI. Is this really a 90 per cent KPI cabinet? If the prime minister wants to save his cabinet members who are performing, I believe he needs to ensure that he only keeps ministers who hold full accountability and can function effectively.

“He (Ismail Sabri) should halt a few bad apples from dragging him through the mud.”