

Restricting PM post to one race will be divisive'

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KOTA KINABALU: Any move to amend the Federal Constitution to restrict the Prime Minister's position to Malays will be divisive, especially for Sabah and Sarawak, says former Sabah Law Society president Datuk Roger Chin.

"Altering the Constitution to favour one group over another will not only violate the social contract but also sow division and resentment, especially in Sabah and Sarawak, where the feeling of being marginalised could be stronger," he said.

He said it was important to strengthen the existing balance among Malaysians.

"We can uphold bumiputra rights while simultaneously safeguarding the fundamental rights of all Malaysians to ensure a level playing field that recognises the unique circumstances and needs of each region within the coun-

try," he said.

Chin was commenting on Bersatu Youth chief and Machang MP Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal's suggestion to amend the Constitution to allow for only Malay Muslims to be the Prime Minister.

His call comes following a speech by DAP stalwart Tan Sri Lim Kit Siang to Malaysian students in Manchester, Britain, last month where he said the Federal Constitution provides that a non-Malay can become a prime minister but added that it is, however, not a "statement of reality".

On Wednesday, Lim gave a statement to the police after he was called in to explain his remarks.

Chin said Wan Ahmad Fayhsal's call raised a critical question of how the country balances Malaysia's dream of inclusiveness with the need to recognise bumiputra rights, especially considering the unique circumstances of

Sabah and Sarawak.

"The answer lies in upholding the Constitution, not amending it.

"It's about a social contract, a promise made at our nation's birth that every citizen, regardless of race, religion or region, can find a home here.

"This contract embraces all creeds and colours, forming the bedrock of our nation, unalterable by mere super-majority votes," he added.

Chin said amending the Constitution to exclude certain groups will be a betrayal of this core principle.

"The Constitution has been amended before, largely to adapt to changing circumstances, not to dismantle its fundamental values."

He noted that the social contract is even more crucial for Sabah and Sarawak, which brought distinct racial, religious and cultural identities that differed significantly from those in

Peninsular Malaysia when they formed Malaysia.

"Respecting this diversity is not just a matter of principle, but a necessity for maintaining unity and harmony within the nation.

"While bumiputra deserve their privileges, other communities, including those in Sabah and Sarawak, have rights too: equal access to education, employment, political representation and economic opportunities.

"These rights, guaranteed by the Constitution, must be respected and protected," he said.

The Malaysian dream is not just about who becomes the Prime Minister but about building a nation where everyone feels valued, empowered and represented, regardless of their background or birthplace, Chin said.