

# Malaysia is multiracial, and we don't need laws to say it is

**M**ALAYSIA is a multiracial country. Though this it is not stipulated in the Federal Constitution, the highest law of the land, or in any legislation, it does not mean that Malaysia is not a multiracial country.

Malaysia has always been a multiracial country even before independence in 1957 and the formation of the federation in 1963. All man-made laws, including the Federal Constitution, are not perfect, thus it is not possible for all of them to embody every matter, including the multiracial status of the country. That is why man-made laws, including the constitution, have been amended when the need arises.

As a multiracial country, mutual respect and tolerance are crucial. Without mutual respect and tolerance, Malaysia will head towards destruction.

Malaysians should be grateful that our society is multiracial. It enables everybody to know each



**DR MUZAFFAR  
SYAH  
MALLOW**

other, and improve themselves to become better people. It's important to highlight that Islam also encourages multiracialism and multiculturalism.

In verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat of the Quran, Allah said: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."

From this verse, it is clear that God created human beings of dif-

ferent races so that we can know each other through the spirit of friendship and cooperation, not through hatred and conflict.

There are various benefits of living in a multiracial society. One of them is the exchange of ideas, values and habits that can increase the quality of life.

When we live in a diverse society, we will become more aware of our cultural identity and feel the need to define it. People living in multicultural societies also feel the need to understand the differences and similarities between themselves and others from different backgrounds.

Thus, they are prouder of their heritage than those living in a homogeneous society. They will also feel generous about celebrating their traditions with others — sharing cuisine, music, dance, art and much more. As a result, the whole society becomes more interesting and complex'.

By living in a multiracial society, we will be surrounded by

people of different backgrounds and cultural identities, thus encouraging tolerance and open-mindedness. In a country with so many immigrants and minorities, and where such a large percentage of the population has mixed heritage, acceptance, tolerance and open-mindedness are the core values that make this nation thrive.

If people feel accepted, valued and embraced by society, they are motivated to contribute to it.

Living in a multiracial society also means having contact with people with different habits, ideas and lifestyles. A mix of perspectives, talents, skills and ideas fosters innovation and makes space for outside-the-box thinking. This can be seen through food, fashion, design, art, entertainment, sports, professional settings and many more.

Every individual of all races has their strengths and weaknesses. There is no such thing a perfect individual or race. Everybody

needs each other if they want to succeed and if they want to make society progress.

We can always amend the Federal Constitution and create new laws to force everybody to live in peace and harmony. However, it would be better if everybody strives to create a peaceful and harmonious society without being forced to do so through rules and regulations.

Whatever it is, the status of Malaysia as a multiracial country is already assured and cannot be denied by anyone. Malaysia was founded on the principle that people of different cultures, religions and backgrounds can co-exist in a peaceful and democratic society.

From big cities to small towns and rural areas, racial and cultural diversity is omnipresent in our country.

The writer is an associate professor at the Faculty of Syariah & Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia