

**Perkasa 'suppresses' ethnic minorities, says MIC**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 18 – MIC today accused Perkasa of “doing its worst” to suppress ethnic minorities in response to Perkasa’s accusations that the Barisan Nasional (BN) party was responsible for scrapping the controversial novel Interlok from the school syllabus.

The Malay rights group had yesterday predicted that Malay voters would reject MIC’s candidates in the coming polls, with secretary-general Syed Hassan Syed Ali saying the decision showed Putrajaya’s “weakness and failure to not succumb to pressure by minorities.”

He also claimed this was a part of MIC’s elaborate plan to woo Indian voters.

“In Malaysia, the BN government is doing its best to take care of the minorities but Perkasa is doing its worst to suppress the minorities like Indians, Eurasians, Kadazans, Dayaks, Orang Aslis and all the other mini-minorities.

“Perkasa is obviously living in the dinosaur age... they should send their office bearers overseas to see how even the once backward politicians have now recognised the need to protect the minorities so that they are not bullied by senseless politicians from amongst the majority,” MIC leader Datuk R Ramanan said in a statement today.

Ramanan, who is MIC deputy social and welfare bureau chairman charged that Perkasa’s viewpoint on the matter was illogical, saying that in a democratic system, the majority race is always protected.

“It is the minorities who need protection.

“Thank God in this country we have Leaders like (Datuk Seri) Najib (Razak) who cares for the rakyat.”

The government has decided to withdraw Interlok from the Form Five syllabus when the new school year starts, with MIC president Datuk G. Palanivel saying yesterday that the Cabinet had reached the decision last week.

The novel by national laureate Datuk Abdullah Hussain is part of the literature requirement in the Bahasa Malaysia syllabus for Form Five students. It was published in 1971 and is set in Penang at the turn of the 20th century during the colonisation of Malaya by the British.

Recent controversy over the novel’s use of words deemed racially sensitive and derogatory had led to the Education Ministry sanctioning amendments to its content for the current school year while it awaited a formal decision by the Cabinet.

Human Resource Minister Datuk Seri Dr. S. Subramaniam, meanwhile, told Bernama Online that Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also education minister, is expected to make a formal announcement in the next few days.

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