

Perkasa: Rev Eu's Article 153 remarks 'politically motivated'
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 29 — Malay rights group Perkasa today accused a senior Christian leader of creating intercommunal friction with his remarks on the constitutional protection for Bumiputeras, claiming the speech was politically motivated.

Calling it "provocative", Perkasa president Datuk Ibrahim Ali claimed of a link between Reverend Dr Eu Hong Seng's controversial Christmas Eve remarks and an impending general election.

"I believe Dr Eu's statement is politically motivated in light of word of elections being around the corner. There is a political motive here to confuse the people into thinking that the government has not been fair to other races.

"That is Dr Eu's motive. Article 153 cannot be questioned... there is a political motive (to) erode Malay rights," Ibrahim told reporters here.

The National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) chairman had said on Christmas Eve that the Federal Constitution's Article 153 was akin to "bullying" if it only protected the rights of one group.

Article 153 states that it is the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's responsibility "to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak and the legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of this Article".

In his speech, Eu had stressed that he did not have problems with rights of the Malays and the Sultans but "what irks many of us are the 'shifting rights'" of the majority.

His remarks prompted demands from Perkasa chief Ibrahim for Eu and others like him to be probed by the police.

Ibrahim along with Perkasa deputy president Datuk Abdul Rahman Abu Bakar and 30-odd Perkasa members lodged a police report against Eu based on an article by The Malaysian Insider and several other publications.

The Pasir Mas MP said Eu's remarks should be viewed by the police seriously, as it was said at a gathering that included non-Malay Barisan Nasional political parties like MCA and Gerakan as well as opposition parties DAP and PKR.

Abdul Rahman pointed out that Article 153 protected not only the rights of Malay, but also Bumiputeras in Sabah and Sarawak, many of whom are Christian.

He said Eu's statement was seditious, and urged the police to charge the Christian leader under the Sedition Act.

Abdul Rahman also took a swipe at minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who was present at the Christmas eve function, and berated him for "not taking action" against Eu.

"We are disappointed with Koh for letting people do such things."

Eu has remained adamant about his remarks, stating it was something that "needed somebody to say it."

Amid the growing debate, opposition leaders have claimed that the constitutional provision has been manipulated by ruling Malay party Umno and was now being used as "a weapon of aggression".

Constitutional expert Prof Abdul Aziz Bari had said that Article 153 meant the King must safeguard Bumiputera privileges without impinging on the legitimate interests of other communities.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin previously denied that the provision had been used to bully any community.

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