

## **Perak mufti says Malays must defend race**

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**By Syed Mu'az Syed Putra**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 25 — Tan Sri Harussani Zakaria has denied claims that he is undermining the Najib administration and insisted today that the Umno president must find a way to unite the Malays.

The Perak mufti told The Malaysian Insider that his advice to Datuk Seri Najib Razak was not influenced by any party but due to concern that "division among Malays is happening for a fact."

"We must defend our race and Najib must find a way to reunite Malays," Harussani (picture) said.

Several blogs and people on micro-blogging site Twitter have questioned Harussani's statement yesterday that the prime minister's weak government was the cause of Malay disunity, with some claiming that the Muslim scholar's statements seemed to be slanted towards Najib's deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Although Harussani acknowledged that he has come under fierce criticism since yesterday, he held to his stand that "division among Malays is a fact, you can see it for yourself."

"When I speak, people will attack me. But I will not stop giving advice to anyone including the prime minister," he said.

He had revealed during a religious forum yesterday that he met and advised Najib on the need to address "weak government, corruption and lack of trust."

Harussani also compared Najib to his father and predecessor, the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, who had listened to him when he was prime minister in the 1970s.

The mufti's remarks come amid intense concerns voiced by Malay groups and NGOs that the Malays have become increasingly divided over the past couple of years.

Some academics concur, with Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak claiming that the divide among the Malays had worsened because the different Malay groups were only interested in pursuing their own respective interests and agendas.

Harussani said today that if the government held to the Federal Constitution, Malays would not be divided.

"Najib needs to figure out a way to reunite the Malays. If the Indians and Chinese can be united, why not the Malays?" he asked.

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