

**PKR says BN 'bending over backwards' for Communist China**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 4 — PKR hit back at Barisan Nasional (BN) today for labelling PAS leaders as communist sympathisers and accused the ruling coalition of “bending over backwards” for Communist China when it deported 11 Uighur Muslim asylum seekers back to the Asian giant.

PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad protested the decision, saying it was a violation of fundamental human rights as it placed the refugees at risk of torture.

“Why is Malaysia bending over backwards for Communist China in an issue not only involving human rights but also the plight of Muslims that Umno has claimed to champion for so-long?

“It is unfortunate that this latest example of the cowardice of Datuk Seri Najib Razak’s administration takes place not only while Muslims are celebrating but Malaysians are also celebrating its independence anniversary,” he said, referring to the just concluded Hari Raya celebration and Merdeka Day.

Malaysia deported 11 Chinese nationals of Uighur ethnicity back to China on August 18, after it was found that the group was allegedly involved in human trafficking and were wanted by the Chinese government.

The Chinese government has been engaged in aggressive policing in its Muslim region of Xinjiang as a number of the ethnic Uighurs there seek independence for the western region as East Turkistan. China has been known to have a zero-tolerance policy for any of its far-flung regions from capital Beijing seeking autonomy or separate rule. Hundreds of Uighurs have been reportedly killed in various riots over the decade, especially in opposition to the China’s majority Han race who have been transmigrating to Xinjiang.

Apart from PKR, the Bar Council has also condemned the move, saying the Uighurs should have been prosecuted here instead for their crimes, if any.

“However, they have been deported to China, and nothing has been heard about protecting their human trafficking victims. There is also no information about the whereabouts of the 11 Uighurs, what has happened to them, or indeed whether or not they are still alive. One of the 11 is married to a Malaysian,” council president Lim Chee Wee had said.

Nik Nazmi (picture) concurred with Lim and demanded Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein explain and guarantee that the remaining five Uighurs presently under detention here would be treated as legitimate asylum seekers following international law and practice.

The five, he added, have already applied for refugee status from the UN Refugee Agency or UNHCR and should be accorded due protection.

He pointed out that the UNHCR had earlier also requested to meet with all 16 Uighur

Muslims in Malaysia but was turned down by the government.

“UNCHR has expressed their regret at the Malaysian government’s decision and the Human Rights Watch (HRW) has already condemned the government’s decision to return the 11 Uighurs and urge the government to not return the remaining five.

“US Republican Representative Chris Smith and Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown, co-chairs of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China have also condemned Malaysia’s actions on the Uighur asylum seekers,” he said.

The HRW, added Nik Nazmi, had also revealed that China has purportedly been bullying countries including Malaysia, Thailand and Pakistan to return Uighur asylum seekers.

He said this began in 2009 in Cambodia when the country was forced to return 20 Uighurs under the protection of the UNHCR including a pregnant woman and two infants to China.

“The Chinese Government have routinely responded to demands for the use of the Uighur language and peaceful practice of Islam as terrorism, separatism and treason.

“OIC, of which Malaysia is a member, has called for China to address the underlying problems of oppression for the Uighurs,” he said.

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