

Moderate Malaysia in danger from Umno and Perkasa, says DAP
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By Debra Chong

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 25 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak's failure to rein in Perkasa is jeopardising Malaysia's name internationally as a moderate country, DAP's Tony Pua said today.

"The game that Umno and Perkasa are playing, regardless of the outcome of the next general election, is a highly dangerous one which may forever tarnish Malaysia's reputation as a moderate country," the opposition lawmaker said in a statement today.

"It will leave Najib in history as the prime minister who failed moderation," he added.

The DAP publicity chief was responding to the latest published remarks from Perkasa's secretary-general who had said that "the faith of Islam, of Muslims is under siege in Selangor".

He noted that the right-wing movement seemed to imply that Christians were likely to become more aggressive in their proselytisation attempts in Selangor with its Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim now in charge of Islamic affairs.

The religious portfolio was previously handled by conservative Datuk Hasan Ali, until earlier this month when he was sacked from Islamic PAS for repeatedly breaching the party's official stand.

Pua (picture) noted that while the prime minister was pushing for Malaysia to lead a global movement of moderates for peace, he was actually creating a fertile ground in breeding extremist racism and religion.

The Petaling Jaya Utara MP pointed to the prime minister's inaction against right-wing Malay movement's growing increasing audacity in issuing statements that provoke fear and anger between Muslims and Christians in the country.

He added the fact that such statements were carried in mainstream media owned by the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) lynchpin, Umno, proved "Najib is either hopeless or devious in the fight against extremism".

Pua raised again the 2010 attacks against houses of worship nationwide by extremists following a court ruling allowing the Catholic Church to publish the word "Allah", and reminded that such "freedom provided Perkasa and its ilk... will not lead to any peaceful outcome".

He said, "Without sincerity and political will from the top leadership, Perkasa has the tacit approval to do its worse in the light of the upcoming general elections to sow fear into the hearts of the Malay-Muslim community in order to protect the vote bank for Umno."

Malaysia's 28 million population is over 60 per cent Muslim, but more than half its citizens in Sarawak and Sabah, long considered the ruling BN's vote bank, are predominantly

Christian.

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