

**'Malay supremacy' still relevant to help Malays, says Umno veep**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 20 — The concept of "Ketuanan Melayu" (Malay supremacy) is still relevant today if its focus remains on helping the Malays improve their standard of living, Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said today.

The Umno vice-president however denied that the terminology propagates the concept of "master and slave" in society, as claimed by leaders in the federal opposition.

Zahid cited a definition by former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as an example, saying that "Malay supremacy is not about the Malays being in a position to dominate, rule over and force their power upon others."

"Malay supremacy meant that the Malays, as the indigenous people in Malaysia, needed to strengthen themselves to ensure they were successful and developed.

"If they are not successful and developed, then they are not 'tuan' (masters), therefore they will be coolies," he said, quoting from Abdullah.

Zahid, who is also defence minister, was speaking today during the launch of two books penned by controversial scholar Assoc Prof Dr Ridhuan Tee Abdullah — "Masih Adakah Ketuanan Melayu?" and "Cabaran Saudara Baharu di Malaysia" — at the Defence Ministry here.

He added that the concept of "Malay supremacy" was not new here, saying it was to show that the Malay race is an "original ethnic group" that should be accorded "special rights" as enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

"But to me, terminologies are not important," Zahid continued. "What is more important is implementation."

He said if the implementation of "Malay supremacy" concept could help uphold Islamic faith and its principles as well as transcend the boundaries of race, it would be sufficient.

Zahid reminded that Malaysia was conceived from the Malay identity, pointing out that prior to the country's formation in 1963, Peninsular Malaysia was known as "Tanah Melayu" or "Malay Land".

"It should be reminded that there are those among the non-Malays who cannot accept the fact that Malaysia is a country based on Malay polity.

"Our history began with the words 'Melayu' (Malay) or 'Tanah Melayu' itself refers to the districts and islands in the country," he said.

Zahid railed against individuals whom he said have been harping on the issue of "Malay supremacy" for the sake of political gain, claiming they were abusing the topic to destroy the "special rights" of the Malays.

“What they want is equality or to be fair and square. When this situation is created, as we all know, the Malays and Bumiputera are still yet to achieve their targeted goals.

“In the end, who will be the true beneficiaries?” he asked.

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