

**New government can choose new flag, says historical society**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**September 6, 2012**  
**By Hafidz Baharom**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 6 — The national flag can be changed if the government of the day wills it, Malaysian Historical Society (MHS) executive chairman Tan Sri Omar Hashim said today.

“New governments always change their flags, as we have seen in Libya and Iraq. So basically if there is a change in government, they can do so,” Omar said.

He added, however, that while the current Malaysian flag remained the chosen symbol of the government, it should be respected and be the only flag flown during National Day celebrations.

The chairman was responding to reporters asking him of the recent re-emergence of the controversial red and white 'Sang Saka Malaya' flag during the Merdeka eve celebration at Merdeka Square.

The event was hosted by a coalition of non-government organisations called Gabungan Janji, headed by national literary laureate A Samad Said.

“The red and white flag, the Sang Saka, is the flag representing Malay kingdoms. We saw this in the 13th and 14th century.

“That is a historical fact,” Omar said today.

Omar added it was not a problem to unveil the Sang Saka for research purposes, mentioning academician Farish Noor's extensive study on the matter.

“It shouldn't be a problem to show the flag for educational and research purposes, but it should not be political,” Omar said.

Omar also added that the red and white stripes were clearly seen in flags of former Malay kingdoms such as the Majapahit sultanate.

A blogger, known only as Singa Selatan (Southern Lion), had admitted to flying the controversial flag during the eve of Malaysia's 55th National day countdown as an attempt to educate people of history.

“We do not represent any political party, be it from the government or the opposition, we represent the youth who wish to project truth and history that has attempted to be drowned out by the responsible parties, and clearly have no motive to change the Jalur Gemilang to Sang Saka Malaya, because Sang Saka Malaya has been turned into the Jalur Gemilang today,” the blogger said in his Bahasa Malaysia entry posted last Friday.

The bloggers actions started a political firestorm with accusations made by the government headed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib that it was a political move sponsored by Opposition bloc Pakatan Rakyat to replace the current flag, the Jalur Gemilang.

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