

Daim says Najib administration needs to fight crime, corruption
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 — Statistics alone are not enough to improve the perception of Malaysians regarding the state of public safety and national security in Malaysia, former Umno minister Tun Daim Zainuddin told the Najib administration in an interview here.

The influential politician said Malaysians would not believe the numbers or the claims of national leaders if they do not feel safe when on their own.

“On the nation’s security, every day in the media and on television, there are news reports of murder and crime,” Daim said in an interview carried by the New Sunday Times today.

“You say our country is safe, but if people don’t feel safe, they will not believe you regardless of the statistics,” he added.

The government has had to fend off much public outrage over the alleged failure of the country’s security institutions to ensure public safety.

Last year, a slew of violent incidents, including murders, assaults and kidnappings, appeared to reinforce what many believed was a surge in crime statistics.

But data from government efficiency unit PEMANDU suggested instead that street crime had dipped by a staggering 40 per cent since the Najib administration introduced its Government Transformation Programme (GTP) in 2010.

Public confidence in the police dipped considerably as opposition leaders and civil society groups suggested that the government was massaging crime data to convey the impression that Malaysia’s streets are safe.

Last July, a DAP MP revealed official figures showing that 86 per cent of the country’s crime busters were not fighting criminals but handling paperwork, “spying” activities and logistics.

“Barely 14 per cent of the uniformed police force is in crime-related departments,” Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong had said in a statement, referring to the criminal investigation, narcotics and commercial crime investigation departments in the PDRM.

“Meanwhile, a whopping 86 per cent of police personnel belong to the non-crime-related sectors (like) management, internal security and public order, logistics, Special Branch and special task forces,” he added.

Last month, Malaysia’s border security took a hit instead after a group of 235 armed Muslim rebels from southern Philippines landed in Sabah’s Lahad Datu to stake their claim over the state.

The violent skirmishes has so far resulted in the death of 10 Malaysians, including eight policemen and two soldiers, and cast a spotlight on the lax security at Malaysian territorial waters.

“I will support Najib,” Daim said in the interview, “... but he must fight corruption and

crime, strengthen the nation's security and review the education system."

Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is ending his first term as the country's sixth prime minister, will soon be leading the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) into what is expected to be the most hotly-contested federal polls.

During the contest, Najib will be facing a more formidable and consolidated federal opposition, and the tough task of having to ensure that BN performs better than it did in Election 2008.

Daim said Najib's team must convince Malaysians that the government is serious in wanting to rid the nation of corruption, an issue that will characterise the opposition's campaign for Putrajaya.

"Tell the rakyat that the government is serious in wanting to get rid of it (corruption). But it cannot do it alone, it needs the rakyat's help.

"Raise the awareness of the rakyat on the evils of corruption and get schools involved in it. Educate the students. If the government and rakyat work together, we can succeed. It is a two-way thing," he said.

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