

1Malaysia Concept Remains Relevant, Say Analysts
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By Mohd Nasir Yusoff and Nur Aimidiyana Zuher

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- The 1Malaysia concept remains relevant despite efforts to interpret the outcome of the 13th general election in a racial context, say analysts.

Political analyst Dr Ibrahim Ghafar said the main consideration is that the Barisan Nasional (BN) managed to win 133 of the 222 parliamentary seats.

"We have to bear in mind that the 1Malaysia concept has nothing to do with political preferences or ideologies. Furthermore, its effectiveness thus far has been demonstrated by the majority of the people voting for moderation, which is represented by the BN," he told Bernama.

Ibrahim said it cannot be denied that at first glance, 1Malaysia appears to be drowned by political ideologies and, in particular, by what the media keeps referring to as the 'Chinese tsunami' which garnered a big win for the opposition DAP.

He stressed that this polarisation was all the more reason for the 1Malaysia concept to be instilled and strengthened among the multiracial communities.

The DAP won 38 parliamentary seats on May 5 on the wave of solid Chinese support in the urban areas despite Chinese candidates from the BN contesting in the same seats.

"I believe, however, that there are still many Chinese who support the BN. There are many Chinese in the constituencies which the BN won," he added.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has made it clear that his priority now is national reconciliation, and for the people to unite towards nation-building despite their political differences. And this is where the 1Malaysia concept should be promoted as a medium for racial unity," he said.

Dr Noor Sulastry Yurni Ahmad, a senior lecturer at the Anthropology and Sociology Department, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Malaya, is of the opinion that national integration will not be achieved if people refuse to shed their hardcore political beliefs.

"The prime minister introduced the 1Malaysia concept to bring the communities closer, to appreciate and implement all aspects of national unity regardless of political beliefs. In fact, the concept also treats racial diversity as a basis to strengthen unity," she added.

"What's important now is that after the majority have given BN the mandate, the party must be given the chance and support to rectify weaknesses and deliver their promises in the next five years. As a peace-loving nation people should also continue supporting 1Malaysia," she said.

A similar opinion was shared by Malaysian Indian Welfare Association president A. Prakash who felt that 1Malaysia was a more suitable concept to unite the multiracial community, which could not be achieved through a political avenue.

"We must be grateful for the peace we have and for the freedom to practice our religions and cultures," he said.

Malaysian Youth Movement president Tan Pei Leong said the outcome of the general election should be accepted by everyone with an open heart.

"We must close this chapter. Malaysians need to calm down and unite, and not provoke each other. We must give the government a chance to prove itself over the next five years," he said.

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