

**Pakatan to hold convention on national unity**  
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**By Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

PETALING JAYA, May 14 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) is planning to hold a “national unity” convention to address the escalating racial tension sparked by Umno’s constant attempt to blame the non-Malay voters for Barisan Nasional’s (BN) dismal showing at in the May 5 general election.

PR secretariat member Datuk Saifuddin Nasution said his three-party coalition saw the need to organise the convention so it can work on a formula for “genuine unity” in light of Umno’s intensified race baiting that began instantly after the election results were announced.

“The convention will be held in the near future so we can discuss on a recipe, a formula for genuine unity.

“This is because we are looking at a dangerous pattern where Umno seem to be unable to move away from the sentiments of race politics,” he told a press conference after chairing PR’s secretariat meeting at PKR’s headquarters here.

The PKR secretary-general said PR is also considering suggestions that it invites its political rivals to participate in the convention, an idea that will be deliberated at tomorrow’s presidential council meeting.

“We will leave it to the leadership to decide if the invitation will be opened to all. The details will be discussed by the presidential council and an announcement will be made,” he said.

BN’s lynchpin Umno have continued to blame the coalition’s poor polls results on a “Chinese tsunami” it claimed was triggered by the DAP, a term that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had coined after the results showed BN winning with a smaller majority of 133 federal seats and ceded an additional seven seats to PR.

Since then, Umno-owned Malay paper Utusan Malaysia ran daily reports with incendiary headlines like “Apa lagi Cina mahu? (What more do the Chinese want?) And “Golongan muda Cina monopoli perhimpunan haram” (Young Chinese monopolise illegal rallies) and “DAP terus cetus provokasi” (DAP continues to incite provocation) in a continued attempt to shape the Election 2013 result as a Malay versus Chinese vote.

Other pro-Umno leaders have also joined in the growing chorus of attacks on the Chinese community with one accusing DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang of being the main protagonist to the bloody May 13 race riots in 1969 while another had blamed racial disparity on vernacular schools and demanded that it be shut down.

Leaders from both sides of the political divide have called on Najib to rein in Umno’s right wing elements and put an end to the racial politicking, of which failing to do so would cast doubt over the prime minister’s “national reconciliation” programme.

Some PR leaders claimed the race politics played by Umno was also an attempt to divert attention from the mass fraud that purportedly took place at the May 5 ballot.

Saifuddin said the pact has agreed to continue holding rallies nationwide to protest the

results following the overwhelming turn-outs it had at rallies held in Penang and Kelana Jaya last week.

"Despite the numbers, some reached 100,000, the rallies took place peacefully and without any untoward incidents.

"The rallies is good for the people to voice their dissatisfaction through the principles of the Federal Constitution," he said.

Saifuddin also chided the police and critics of the rallies for calling the peaceful demonstrations seditious, arguing that the authorities should instead reprimand those behind the race baiting like Umno and Utusan Malaysia.

"Calling for the closure of vernacular schools is more seditious than we are doing," he said.

Meanwhile Saifuddin said he welcomes Umno information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan's dare that PR invites the Elections Commission (EC) for a meeting to raise its complaints of polls fraud.

Ahmad claimed yesterday that PR's refusal to engage the EC on the matter proved that the opposition had no evidence to back its allegations.

"I agree with Ahmad Maslan to invite EC chief Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Yusof for a meeting so we can raise our complaints one by one. In case he rejects our invitation I am sure that Ahmad Maslan could assist us in arranging the meeting. I now throw the ball back to him and ask that he be ready to make this happen," he said.

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