

**Putrajaya does not endorse but won't block 'buy Chinese last' campaign, says minister**

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**By Md Izwan**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 18 – Putrajaya does not approve a campaign to boycott Chinese businesses initiated by pro-Umno bloggers and backed by several Muslim groups, Datuk Hasan Malek said today but the new Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism minister added that he cannot block their right to do so.

Several pro-Umno bloggers and the Muslim Consumers Association Malaysia (PPIM) had recently called for consumers to boycott or at the very least buy goods sold by Chinese companies last, including products such as the Massimo brand bread, Cap Sauh wheat flour and coffee-shop chain Old Town White Coffee.

"We will not get involved with those who want to boycott," Hasan told reporters after launching the Buy Malaysian Goods expo here today.

"We are a ministry for Malaysians," added the newly-minted minister.

Several Umno leaders have blamed the Chinese for Barisan Nasional's (BN) unprecedented losses in Election 2013, where the coalition won just 133 federal seats and lost the popular vote for the first time since 1969 when it contested as the Alliance party then.

Hasan said today he would call for a discussion with the Malay groups that had initiated the campaign, even as he defended their right to express their unhappiness.

"We'll find a solution... each NGO has its own opinion. They have a right to speak," he said, adding that he could not restrict or block them from doing so.

PPIM wrote on its website that Malaysians who love peace and harmony must boycott "DAP products" like Massimo bread, Old Town White Coffee, the Pappa Rich restaurant chain, Cap Sauh wheat flour and 99 Speedmart.

Pro-Umno blog, [theunspinnners.blogspot.com](http://theunspinnners.blogspot.com), called yesterday for a "Buy Malay first! Buy Chinese last!" campaign and listed several products sold by Muslims and by "DAP allies".

The predominantly Chinese DAP opposition had been accused of instigating Chinese voters to turn their backs to the BN.

The minority race make up about 30 per cent of the country's 28 million population but is seen to hold great economic clout.

The list of products sold by "DAP allies" includes Isomax Isotonic drink, Malta beverage, Buruh brand cooking oil, as well as the EconSave supermarket, while the list of products sold by Muslims includes Gardenia brand bread, Saji brand cooking oil, Cap Bidara brand wheat flour, as well as the Mydin supermarket.

Other pro-Umno bloggers involved in the campaign are [bigdogdotcom.wordpress.com](http://bigdogdotcom.wordpress.com), [gerakan-anti-pkr.blogspot.com](http://gerakan-anti-pkr.blogspot.com), [parpukari.blogspot.com](http://parpukari.blogspot.com), and [anotherbrickinwall.blogspot.com](http://anotherbrickinwall.blogspot.com).

The DAP won 38 federal seats out of Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) 89 seats, making it the second-largest party in Parliament.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said last Saturday that the racist politics played by the DAP had prevented BN from winning more seats in the May 5 general election.

Umno-owned daily Utusan Malaysia suggested that the election outcome was a Malay versus Chinese vote by coming up with the headline last week, "Apa lagi Cina mahu? (What more do the Chinese want?)"

Najib has also attributed BN's record losses to what he described as a "Chinese tsunami", despite analysts noting increased support towards PR among the urban and Malay middle-class, while rural voters remained firm BN supporters.

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