

**We have done our part on deaths in custody – MIC boss**  
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**By Yiswaree Palansamy**

The leader of Malaysia's oldest Indian political party today denied it was tame on the issue of Indian deaths in police custody.

It has been doing its job by making "powerful statements" to the Government on this matter, declared Datuk Seri G. Palanivel, president of the Malaysian Indian Congress.

"We are following up on the issue constantly. We have not been 'tame' on it," Palanivel said.

Since 1990, the number of deaths in custody has shown a worrying trend, with the latest casualty being 32-year-old truck driver N. Dharmendran.

When asked by The Malaysian Insider if he would consider roping in P. Waythmoorthy, the chairman of Hindraf, the Hindu Rights Action Force, Palanivel said, "I do not have to work with him in this... I know how to work on it."

He said he will work only with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on the matter.

The Natural Resources and Environment Minister was speaking at a press conference today after a high-level meeting to plan the party elections for the end of this year.

"MIC has already made its stand on the issue and I am not being tame over the controversy," Palanivel replied when pressed during the press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, losing his cool.

In a separate room, the party's strategy director S. Vell Paari said that while MIC is taking the necessary steps to address deaths in custody, attention also needs to be given to deaths in prison.

He expressed concern over the police rejecting the idea of the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission. He felt this has led to the idea of that the commission would be "watered down" to the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC) which is already in existence and which has too broad a brief.

"There are issues but I myself am also personally looking into it by working closely with Datuk Paul Low (Minister in Prime Minister's Department) and we hope to be able to address this matter swiftly," Vel Paari added.

The EAIC was formed to investigate the 21 federal enforcement authorities, including the police force. But several MIC insiders claim that the EAIC itself is burdened with foundation issues and doubt if the body is effective, citing the need for better qualified commissioners from both sides of the political divide. – June 18, 2013.

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