

I don't recognise Perkasa, says Samad Said
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BY HASBULLAH AWANG CHIK

National laureate Datuk A. Samad Said (pic) has thumbed his nose at Malay right-wing organisation Perkasa over its call for him to return his honorific to the government.

He said he will ignore the call from the group led by Datuk Ibrahim Ali, who had questioned his patriotism over his attendance at an event where the Sang Saka Malaya flag was flown.

"I don't recognise Perkasa. If they want the title stripped from me, then they should act on it themselves," said the poet in a text reply to The Malaysian Insider.

Ibrahim demanded that Samad should return the national laureate title to prove that he would not be bothered if it was stripped off him.

This came after Samad had said he was not bothered by calls to strip off his national laureate title for allegedly insulting the country.

"I applaud Samad's bravery, but he should return the national laureate title himself if he is sincere. Many people will criticise the government if it revokes the title," Ibrahim had said at a press conference on Thursday.

A defiant Samad today also brushed aside rebukes over his participation at the Merdeka eve event at Dataran Merdeka.

He said he was invited to the event by Himpunan Hijau, a non-governmental organisation.

"It was just a coincidence that the flag was flown when I was on the stage. I was not aware of the incident. It was easy for certain parties to link it to me.

"I know Hishamuddin Rais and Adam Adli were there but they arrived earlier than me. When it was my turn to be with Himpunan Hijau, they were already there.

"To link me (to the flag) is unreasonable although I sympathise with Adam Adli and Hishamuddin," he said.

Hishamuddin and Adam, both activists, were the first to be arrested by police. Two days later, Samad was also arrested. All three are being investigated under the Sedition Act.

The Sang Saka Malaya is a red-and-white flag with 12 yellow stars set in four columns and was reportedly proposed as Malaya's national flag in the 1940s. The country does not recognise the flag and those caught flying the flag can be charged under the Sedition Act.

When asked whether he agreed with flying the flag on the eve of Merdeka, Samad said the flag was relevant to the cause of those who lived in the past.

While the flag is now part of history, Samad said it is not wrong for Malaysians to reflect back on that particular period of time.

The recent incident involving the Sang Saka Malaya flag was captured on video and went

viral on YouTube.

The video showed a commotion where a man was seen shouting, "that is the Malaysian flag", pointing to the large Jalur Gemilang at Dataran Merdeka, after grabbing the Sang Saka Malaya flag off the group comprising Samad, Hishamuddin Rais and Adam Adli.

Soon after, three non-governmental organisations lodged police reports on the incident.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had slammed Samad, calling the incident as "indecent and shameful" while Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek described Samad a "child trying to seek attention" and compared him to the heretic Ayah Pin.

Samad did not want to comment on what Muhyiddin and Ahmad Shabery reportedly said. - September 7, 2013.

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