

**MCA, Putrajaya on collision course over Chin Peng's ashes**  
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**BY EILEEN NG**

The MCA is insisting that Chin Peng's remains should be allowed back into the country, putting the Chinese party on a collision course with Putrajaya which is dead set against the return of the former Malayan communist leader.

MCA publicity bureau chairman Datuk Heng Seai Kie (pic) said there was no law in the country which forbids anyone from either having their last rites or being buried in Malaysia.

She pointed out the remains of terrorists Dr Azahari Husin and Nordin Mohamad Top were allowed to return to Malaysia for burials in Jasin, Malacca and Pontian, Johor respectively.

Dr Azahari and Nordin were responsible for a string of bombings in Indonesia between 2002 and 2005.

"Born and bred in Malaya, Chin Peng has the right to be interred in Malaysia. After all, what harm can his ashes do to the country?" Heng said, adding the communist chief's wish to be buried in his hometown should be fulfilled.

"The Barisan Nasional government does not need any more bad publicity of being seen as making decisions based on racial lines," she said in a statement in Kuala Lumpur today.

MCA is one of the founding parties of the multi-ethnic BN ruling coalition, which has ruled the country for 56 years.

The party fared badly in the 13th general election, ending up with only seven parliamentary and 11 state seats, down from the 15 parliamentary and 32 state seats in the 2008 national polls.

Heng said Chin Peng was a resistance fighter against the Japanese Army and was awarded the Order of the British Empire by the British government for his contributions, although it was later withdrawn.

"Unlike the two terrorists whose targets were innocent tourists, Chin Peng's war was to secure independence.

"The only difference was his battles hinged on Communist ideology which Malaysians at large rejected. His targets were security forces but unfortunately in the process, civilians were killed too," she said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had said yesterday the country will not budge from its stand to prevent Chin Peng's remains from being brought back, and challenged those unhappy with the decision to seek legal redress.

"The government has decided and those unhappy with the decision can challenge it in court," he had said.

MCA vice-president Gan Ping Sieu had called on the government to soften its stand and

allow Chin Peng's ashes to return in fulfilling the spirit of the Haadyai Peace Accord.

Gan had stressed that the international community may cast suspicion on rule of law in Malaysia if the country continued to prevent the late communist leader's ashes from being brought in.

Chin Peng, whose real name is Ong Boon Hua, died in a Bangkok hospital on Malaysia Day, a month short of his 89th birthday. He had repeatedly voiced his wish to be buried in his hometown of Sitiawan, Perak.

He will be cremated in Bangkok on Monday according to Buddhist rites.

Since 1989, Chin Peng had tried in vain to be allowed back in Malaysia. His attempts to get the courts to allow his return ended in 2009 when the apex court ruled against his application to reside in Malaysia because he was unable to prove he was born in the country.

Chin Peng fled to China in 1961 and later settled in Bangkok where he was granted an alien passport.

He reportedly moved to Haadyai in recent years and shuttled between Haadyai and Bangkok for his cancer treatment.

He became secretary-general of the Communist Party of Malaya at the age of 23 and was Britain's "enemy number one" in Southeast Asia at the height of the communist insurgency in Malaya. - September 20, 2013.

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