

**Why the bias, Najib?
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KOTA KINABALU: News that Petronas donated RM5 million as additional aid to Terengganu flood victim has riled Sabah STAR chief Jeffrey Kitingan.

He said the latest report proved that Sabahans are being shabbily treated and that the federal government led by Priem Minister Najib Tun Razak was biased..

Seeing this as an affront to Sabah and Sarawak which are contributing RM26.6 billion and RM45 billion respectively to Petronas and the federal government Kitingan said: "The federal government owes us an explanation".

He said Terengganu contributed only a fraction of what Sabah and Sarawak gave Petronas and the federal authorities.

"To add salt to injury, Petronas gave another RM5 million as additional aid ... comforter sets and RM150 Petronas Kedai Mesra vouchers to the flood victims in Terengganu and Pahang. What about us?," he asked.

Based on revenue contribution, he said, Petronas would have to contribute at least RM50 million to the flood victims in Sabah and Sarawak and complete house furniture and RM1,500 Petronas Kedai Mesra vouchers per family.

The current flood aid controversy has shown the two Borneo states as mere "appendages" of Malaya or colonies across the South China Sea by the federal government, the opposition politician said.

"It is as though the federal government of Malaysia is the federal government of Malaya and looking after their immediate states under them in Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan.

"Of course, if this is the mindset and action of the federal government, Sabahans and Sarawakians cannot complain as Sabah and Sarawak are not part of the federation of Malaya which gain independence on 31 August 1957 whereas Sabah and Sarawak formed Malaysia with Malaya on 16 September 1963," he said.

He thus stressed that for Malaysia to continue united as a federation and for Malaysians to believe in peace and harmony, the PM and the federal government needs to undergo a major overhaul and transformation in mindset and in action.

The Bingkor assemblyman has jumped on the poor response by the federal government to the floods which hit Sabah recently after heavy and unseasonal rainfall exposed the promised flood-mitigation programme as non-existent.

"The response or rather non-response of the federal government to the flood situation and flood victims in Sabah leaves much to be desired.

No excuses please

Sabahans are shabbily treated and there can be no excuses.

“It is not as if Sabahans want to be given television sets, refrigerators and other aid but to be treated fairly and equally and as equal Malaysians,” said Kitingan.

Kitingan claimed that even ordinary Umno members and district leaders in Sabah are surprised by the inaction of the federal government on the plight of flood victims in the state.

“While their West Malaysian counterparts are getting television sets and all sorts of aid, Sabahans are getting only mud and mudslides from the floods,” he said.

He pointed out how the heavy downpours lately had also caused a series of landslides that resulted in the closure of major roads around the state cutting off rural areas from major towns and causing the closure of 11 schools in various districts.

“Thousands have been affected ... a school and village houses in Tuaran were destroyed by the floods, yet, such catastrophic events never even made the prime time news on RTM and TV3.

“However, the closing of five schools in Kelantan received prime time television coverage,” he said.

He also expressed sadness over reports that a Sarawakian student was refused treatment at a government hospital in Johor Baru as though she was an illegal immigrant from Sarawak.

Such incidences, he said, caused people in the two states to reflect on the status of Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysia.

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