

**Najib welcome for interfaith talk, but not Perkasa, says forum organiser**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**Feb 22, 2014**  
**OLEH LEE SHI-IAN**

The organiser of an interfaith forum at a church in Kajang last weekend has ruled out inviting Perkasa for a similar event due to the group's propensity for race-baiting and incitement of religious hatred.

The executive director of the Centre for Reform, Democracy and Social Initiatives Dr Edmund Santhara said Malay rights group Perkasa was notorious for its intolerant views.

News portal Malaysiakini quoted Santhara as saying any suggestion of inviting Perkasa to address an interfaith forum was out of the question.

"We would be more than happy to invite Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak for a similar event," Santhara was quoted as saying by Malaysiakini.

"More interfaith talks would be in Malaysia's best interest," he said, adding that last weekend's talk by PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was a social, not political event.

Former Perkasa vice-president Zulkifli Noordin had said in a blog posting that Anwar's visit to the Kajang church to talk about the "Allah" issue would upset Muslims in Malaysia.

Zulkifli said that Anwar's church speech was an attempt to canvass support ahead of the Kajang by-election next month.

He also challenged the Holy Family Church, where Anwar gave his speech, to permit Umno and Muslim NGOs like Perkasa and Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (Isma) to give talks.

Santhara told Malaysiakini that they were more than willing to give Najib 35 minutes to address the congregation and a further 35 minutes for a question-and-answer session.

"To further allay misunderstandings about what occurred last Sunday, anyone can examine the speeches made at the event last weekend."

Holy Family Church (HFC) priest, Father George Harrison said the event had been hosted last week as Anwar wanted to strengthen ties between Christians and Muslims in Malaysia.

"However, this does not mean that HFC endorses Anwar's candidacy in the Kajang by-election," Harrison told Malaysiakini.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/najib-welcome-for-interfaith-talk-but-not-perkasa-says-forum-organiser>

