

Act against Utusan editor for defying reconciliation plan, Najib urged
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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has been again urged to take action against Umno mouthpiece Utusan Malaysia for continuing to stoke racial and religious fires to demonstrate his seriousness about his national reconciliation plan (NRP).

DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang today referred to an article by the paper's editor Datuk Zaini Hassan titled "Orang Melayu sudah tidak peduli dengan bangsa sendiri?" (Malays no longer care for their own race?), protesting the suggestion to remove race from official forms.

Zaini wrote that such a move would lead to Malays giving up their rights and privileges.

"If Najib wants to be the PM for all Malaysians, he should not just ignore the incitements of racial and religious animosities but he should declare a 'long-delayed' war and give no quarter to the instigators and extremists who want to destroy the fabric of Malaysia's plural society," Lim said in a statement today.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Joseph Kurup, saying Malaysians were divided by racial and religious identities after more than 50 years of independence, recently called for the removal of the "race" columns from official forms to create a national identity.

But Zaini said the suggestion was brought on by pressure from human rights organisations.

"If all Malays agree, after this there won't be any mark for race in any official forms in their country. No box which says Malay, Chinese, Indian or Others.

"The reason is, people are scared of have a phobia even to say the word Malay these days. So the word has to be erased," he wrote.

Najib in a blog posting yesterday promised to unveil the NRP and implement it over the next few months, while urging Malaysians to ignore extremist groups and not give them publicity.

"Do not give these extremists the publicity they crave. If no one reports on their actions, they will not gain the recognition they want. They will not be able recruit more people to their cause. They will fail," he said.

Lim however said Umno-linked newspapers like Utusan were behind reports encouraging extremists.

"The problem is that such vitriolic articles, inciting racial and religious animosities and hatred, are not the work of individuals but of the official newspaper of Umno, the backbone of Barisan Nasional government," he said.

"Is Najib seriously suggesting that Utusan be given a free hand to pump vitriol and stoke racial and religious animosities? Is this Najib's way to national reconciliation and national unity in Malaysia?

He said Najib should take stern action against Zaini's open defiance of the NRP by sacking him as the Utusan editor or issue an ultimatum.

"Why is Najib condoning Utusan Malaysia and other Umno leaders to continue with their irresponsible and reckless campaign to cause panic among Malays and Muslims in the country with the false impression that they are under grave threat and siege?"

Lim quoted columnist Karim Raslan, who wrote that it was ironic the "irresponsible and reckless elements" would want to cause panic that Malays and Islam are under siege, when the community has never had more reason to feel "safer" than today.

"I agree with the columnist. Karim has put his finger on the nub of the problem affecting nation building, national reconciliation and the leadership of Najib – whether he is prepared to be the PM for all Malaysians, regardless of race, religion or region," he said.

"Let us wait whether Najib will stand by Joseph Kurup who is entrusted with the portfolio of national integration, national unity and national reconciliation and who is coming under attack from the instigators and extremists in our midst.

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