

Najib says 'race' in official forms here to stay
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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today said there is no plan to drop the "race" column in official forms, a day after a minister in the Prime Minister's Department announced that the cabinet had decided to do away with it.

"The statement is inaccurate. We did discuss it in the cabinet but our decision was to let it remain," Berita Harian quoted Najib as telling reporters today.

Yesterday, Datuk Joseph Entulu Belaun said the government after studying the matter had decided to do away with the "race" column in stages.

He added that for now, the column will be dropped if it is found as not adding value, such as in forms for the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) and housing loan scheme forms for the low-income group.

Najib said the column for race was needed to ensure "every community is given fair consideration" and not left out from government policies, reported Berita Harian.

In February, Tan Sri Joseph Kurup, another Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said it was high time that the word "race" was removed from all official forms in the country as a step towards creating a single national identity.

Kurup, who made the call at the launch of the National Unity Consultative Council's first meeting on February 22, had said that Malaysians were still divided by racial and religious identities 50 years after independence.

His suggestions were met with stiff opposition from Umno mouthpiece Utusan Malaysia, which warned that such an act would lead to Malays giving up their rights and privileges.

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

"The reason is people are afraid of and have a phobia of using the word 'Malay' these days. So the word has to be erased," wrote the paper's editor Datuk Zaini Hassan. – May 8, 2014.

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