

Najib, ministers visit soup kitchen after KL ban order delayed
Malaysian Insider
July 10, 2014
BY QUEK YIING HUEY

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak visited a soup kitchen in Kuala Lumpur last night, after his government was roundly criticised over the past week for banning such charitable activities in the capital city.

His entourage included Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Mansor, who declared the ban a week ago, and Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim, who said tourists were also taking advantage of the soup kitchen's charity.

Putrajaya has now delayed the ban on soup kitchens from a 2-kilometre radius of Lot 10 in the Bukit Bintang shopping district until after August 16, in view of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan where charitable acts are encouraged.

"I also thought this was rather hilarious. Tengku Adnan told me that because I've been calling him names, he had to come to the ground to witness the situation for himself," Pertiwi soup kitchen founder Munirah Abdul Hamid said before bursting into laughter.

"But I see this as a positive outcome, something which will benefit the homeless community," she told The Malaysian Insider after the visit by the prime minister.

Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor (2nd from right), the man at the centre of the homeless controversy, at the Pertiwi soup kitchen operation, last night. – Pic courtesy Pertiwi Soup Kitchen, July 10, 2014. Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor (2nd from right), the man at the centre of the homeless controversy, at the Pertiwi soup kitchen operation, last night. – Pic courtesy Pertiwi Soup Kitchen, July

10, 2014. Najib and the ministers, accompanied by high ranking officers from the Social Welfare Department (JKM), arrived with Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Seri Ahmad Phesal at the second distribution point of the Pertiwi soup kitchen, which provides food and free medical services on Wednesday nights.

Munirah said she was surprised with this visit from the officials, saying that she only realised it when she saw an unusually huge crowd of people breaking the silence of the area at 11.20pm.

She added that after speaking to the homeless, Najib approached her to

express his desire to find a solution to homelessness.

“However, I told him that he must consult with the homeless first as they are rather afraid and skeptical of the environment in the halfway homes,” said Munirah.

She also described plans by the women, family and community development ministry to round up and place the homeless at the Desa Bina Diri shelter-cum-rehabilitation centre in Sungai Buloh as premature.

Under Ops Qaseh, vagrants and beggars can be detained under the Destitute Persons Act 1997, which gives authorities the power to produce a homeless person in front of a magistrate within 24 hours of the arrest.

If the magistrate has reasons to believe that he or she is a destitute person, an order can be made to temporarily admit the person to a welfare home for one month, pending a report from the officer.

The magistrate could also extend the order for a further period of three years.

“Let’s hope they actually carry out what they’ve said they will do. It’s not about who wins or loses, it’s about us addressing the needs of those less fortunate,” Munirah said.

Putrajaya has postponed its unilateral ban on soup kitchens from July 7 to next month, but Kuala Lumpur's charities say they will continue providing food for the homeless and poor.

City Hall and the government have said they are looking at permanent distribution points for the charities to ensure cleanliness and access to public spaces. – July 10, 2014.

- See more at:
<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/najib-ministers-visit-soup-kitchens-after-kl-ban-order-delayed#sthash.r3r83fEq.dpuf>

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/najib-ministers-visit-soup-kitchens-after-kl-ban-order-delayed>