

**Give constructive criticism on unity bills, interfaith panel tells ex-chief justice**  
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Former Chief Justice of Malaysia Tun Abdul Hamid Mohamad came under fire from the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) for criticising the body without understanding its roles and functions properly.

Hamid, who is head of National Unity Front, a unity council set up by Perkasa and other Muslim NGOs as a counter to NUCC, said yesterday that the government had given the task of drafting the unity bills to the opposition, who had now "taken over" the NUCC.

He had also said he was asked to join the NUCC but had declined as he feared being used by certain parties, who wanted to cast aside Malay rights and the position of Islam in the country.

"I was afraid I would become a 'traitor' to the Malays and Islam," he had said.

Addressing the former chief justice's allegations, the NUCC members Datuk Mujahid Yusof Rawa, Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah and Lim Chee Wee said in a statement that it has never presented itself as an opposition faction although not all members were from the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition.

"NUCC was formed by the government and the appointment of every member and the chairman was done according to certain criteria," they said in a statement.

"We all work in a team with clear goals and we are not interested in our colleagues' political orientation.

"We are led by someone who was the government's secretary and who has held several important positions in civil service before," they said, referring to NUCC chairman Tan Sri Samsuddin Osman.

Mujahid, Saifuddin and Lim criticised Hamid for claiming to have turned down an invitation to join NUCC as chairman, saying that the implication of his statement was disappointing and should not have come from someone like him.

"We are not sure how far his claim of declining the position of NUCC chairman, is true. But is he implying that the current chairman is willing to be used?"

NUCC also denied that the agenda of the proposed unity bills was not cast aside the rights of the Malays, the rulers and of Islam, saying that these rights are more protected under the new laws.

"These rights will be more protected when all religious and racial hatred is criminalised. Do we want to continue to see this hatred determine the future of our country?"

"We call on Tun Abdul Hamid to take some time to read the draft first and urge him to give constructive and substantiated criticisms to improve the bills," they added.

The trio are part of the NUCC's working committee on law and policy, with Mujahid as the head and Lim, his deputy. They have been tasked with drafting a law to replace the draconian Sedition Act.

It has since drafted three bills, namely the Racial and Religious Hate Crimes Bill, the National Harmony and Reconciliation Bill and the National Harmony and Reconciliation Commission Bill, which have come under severe criticism from various parties. – July 2, 2014.

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