

**Obama meddling in our affairs, says former NST editor  
Malaysian Insider  
April 29, 2014**

Criticism of United States President Barack Obama continued to pour in from Umno supporters over his insinuations that Malaysia discriminated against non-Muslims, the latest being former New Straits Times editor-in-chief Datuk Abdul Kadir Jasin, who described Obama's statements as a form of foreign interference in Malaysia's affairs and a provocation.

Kadir, who ran the pro-Umno English daily for 12 years, also criticised the ruling Datuk Seri Najib Razak administration and Malay-Muslims for not responding adequately to the US president's statement made on Sunday.

"The question is are Malay-Muslims going to keep silent in the face of interference from Obama just because there are people who are so 'elated' that they can ride in the same car as him or (because) he (Obama) whispers praises those people's ear?," Kadir wrote in his latest posting.

Kadir may have been referring to members of Najib's government who were responsible for organising Obama's historic three-day visit to Malaysia.

Obama is the first sitting US president to visit Malaysia in 48 years.

The success of his visit has been attributed to Najib's continuous efforts to build strong ties with the Obama administration since he became prime minister in 2009.

"Indirectly, Obama has elected himself as a spokesman for Malaysians who have complained to him that they are supposedly being severely discriminated against by Malay-Muslims," Kadir said.

He also questioned the veracity of Obama's claims that non-Muslims faced discrimination.

"Who are the non-Muslims minorities who are oppressed, who cannot worship and who are destitute?"

"What about the dozens of churches in Brickfields, Jalan Gasing and Sentul? What about the Hindu temples on every street corner, under every big tree and the one in the cave?"

"What about the Buddhist, Siamese temples, the Sikh Gurdwaras and Chinese temples found all over the country. And who controls the economy?" Kadir asked.

He, however, praised Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who refuted Obama by saying that the Malaysian government was fair to all religions and gave equal opportunities to non-Muslims.

"Congratulations Ahmad Zahid. It was not a waste for Umno delegates who voted you in as the most popular vice-president in the recent elections.

"Thank God that there are still Umno faces who have not been infected by the Koro syndrome," said Kadir.

At a town hall meeting at Universiti Malaya on Sunday, Obama said Malaysia could not become a developed country if it continued to discriminate against non-Muslims and minority communities.

The US president was responding to a question from a student from Myanmar, who said one of the problems which plagued that Southeast Asian country was that it did not protect the rights of its minority Muslim community.

Ethnic Rohingnyas in northeast Myanmar have over the past few years been persecuted and driven from their homes by the majority Buddhists of that country.

Obama then went on to say: "Malaysia won't succeed if non-Muslims don't have equal opportunity, Myanmar won't succeed if the Muslim population is oppressed.

"No society is going to succeed if half your population made up of women are not getting the same education and employment opportunities as men," he added.

Though Malaysia allowed for freedom of religion, recent incidents between Christians and Muslims and Hindus and Muslims have led to questions as to whether Putrajaya was really committed to protecting minority faiths.

These include the ongoing tussle over the use of the word "Allah" and child custody cases between Muslim and non-Muslim parents.

Obama's statement had been criticised by Malay supremacist group Perkasa, whose president Ibrahim Ali who described critics of Malaysia's treatment of non-Muslims as "mindless" and "not rational". – April 29, 2014.

Hakcipta © 2013 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/obama-meddling-in-our-affairs-says-former-nst-editor>