

DAP's Ngeh gives Ismail Sabri 24 hours to apologise for his anti-Chinese post
The Malaysian Insider
March 11, 2015
By Eileen Ng

DAP's Datuk Ngeh Koo Ham has given an Umno minister a final ultimatum: apologise for his incendiary anti-Chinese remarks within 24 hours or face legal action.

He said the notice of demand is ready, but has not been served on Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaacob as he is still waiting for an apology.

"I will give him another 24 hours to apologise," he said at a press conference at the parliament lobby today.

Ismail had come under fire last month for his Facebook posting urging Malays to boycott Chinese traders.

He said Malay consumers had a role in helping Putrajaya fight profiteers by using their collective power to lower the price of goods.

The minister is also embroiled in an allegation he reportedly made of Ngeh, whom the former said had shares in the popular OldTown White Coffee chain owned by OldTown Bhd.

Ngeh subsequently threatened to sue the minister for labelling him and his family anti-Islam, after Ismail failed to meet the 48-hour deadline he set to retract and apologise for the remarks.

Ngeh said today he does not want this to go to court if possible as he only wanted to serve the people as the MP for Beruas.

"I am giving Ismail a last chance. If he does not apologise, I will initiate legal action," he said.

Ismail's comments drew flak from the public, opposition leaders and leaders within the Barisan Nasional component parties, with MCA, Gerakan and DAP members lodging police reports against him.

However, he also found support from Umno leaders and the Najib administration, with the Prime Minister's Department issuing a statement defending Ismail, saying the minister had not targeted any specific race with his social media post.

The same stance was echoed by minister in the prime minister's department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim in his written reply to Sim Tze Tzin (PKR – Bayan Baru), causing the first-term MP to question if Putrajaya is condoning racism.

"Does this mean the Malaysian government is now condoning racism? Are statements that are racist in nature coming from Umno ministers allowed?" he asked and questioned the reaction of Umno's partners MCA and Gerakan. – March 11, 2015.

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