

Claims of Chinese rejecting BR1M must have proof, MCA tells Dr M
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By Ram Anand

Claims that the Chinese community are not receptive of 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) must be backed up by numbers and not mere claims, MCA secretary-general Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan said today.

This followed former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that the community sees BR1M as a form of "bribery", in his criticism against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's policies.

But Ong said such claims must be backed up with evidence.

"That is just talk. Any such claim must be supported by numbers. As far as I know, the people like BR1M."

BR1M was a one-off cash aid to the lower income group introduced by Najib prior to the 13th general election, which he had carried on as an annual exercise.

Ong said it was "normal" for those who did not received the aid to be critical of it.

"Only those who have received it will appreciate it."

Yesterday, Najib said BR1M was not introduced as a political decision but was instead a suggestion made by the national fiscal committee of Bank Negara Malaysia.

In a blog post answering his critics today, Najib continues to defend the cash aid.

He described the aid as a form of social security allowance similarly implemented in many other countries.

"Some call it unemployment benefit, which targets the unemployed. However, BR1M targets the low income group. Both, in essence, are a form of social security allowance as they target vulnerable groups."

Seen in the context of a targeted subsidy, Najib said the fiscal committee believed that BR1M would reduce leakages and increase the efficiency of the subsidy mechanism.

"BR1M also compensates the needy for additional expenditure they might incur due to the goods and services tax (GST)."

He added that with BR1M, GST will not become a regressive tax as the low income groups are being compensated.

Najib said his critics had failed to view it as an economic measure, preferring instead

to look at it in the context of politics.

"Some politicians say that in spite of BR1M, the people are 'not grateful'. This is exactly why they believe it is bribery," he said, adding that his conscience is clear that cash aid is an economic measure. – May 17, 2015.

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