

Award deferred, but Rosmah declines it - PMO

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Rosmah Mansor and Permata have declined to receive the 'Lead by Example' award which has been deferred to next year.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office said Rosmah made the decision to avoid further distraction from the important work for the children of Malaysia.

On Sept 18, according to the PMO, Malaysia's permanent representative to the United Nations received an email from Prof Tudor Parfit, who chairs the academic advisory board of the organising committee.

"Parfit stated the award would be deferred to 2017 because of what he called 'interventions' from the Wall Street Journal and New York Times regarding the funding of Permata," it said.

Rosmah, who is the wife of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, was initially slated to receive the award in New York on Thursday, but was struck off the list at the eleventh hour.

Yesterday, *Malaysiakini* reported Parfit as stating that the organisation had been quizzed by the media about the sources of funding for Permata.

He said as academics, the organisation had no immediate means of verifying funding for Permata, and was not aware of any specific wrongdoing.

"However, we do not wish this important event to be dominated by anything other than the issue of how to mobilise and unite people in the fight against violent extremism.

"The committee therefore decided it requires more time to review the comments that have been received, and has removed Permata from the list of Thursday's honourees," he added.

Rosmah, Permata did not apply for award

Meanwhile, the PMO clarified that neither Permata nor Rosmah had applied for the award.

"On Sept 8, 2016, Irina Bokova in her capacity as director-general of Unesco sent letters to the prime minister, Rosmah and Foreign Minister Anifah Aman.

"The letters stated that Rosmah was to be given a special tribute award at an event co-hosted by Unesco on Sept 22, 2016. This was in recognition of efforts undertaken by the government of Malaysia to counter extremism through the educational system, and specifically the approach taken by Permata founded in 2007 by Rosmah," it said.

The PMO also stated that Permata is wholly funded by the government under an allocation, transparently included in the annual budget and approved by Parliament.

"All expenditures are in accordance with government financial procedures. This is not only a matter of public record, but could have been immediately explained had we or Permata been asked before the award deferment," it added.

The PMO also criticised those attempting to politicise the work of Permata, which it described as an exemplary organisation whose only aim is to improve the lives of children.

"And we regret that those who chose to bestow the award have given in to the smears and insinuations of some who are only focussed on their campaign against Malaysia, the government and prime minister.

"Those behind this politically-motivated campaign care nothing for the damage caused by these false allegations, its staff and all the young people they have helped and cared for.

"Neither Permata nor Rosmah will be distracted by people who cast false aspersions to undermine a noble cause.

"Their focus will remain on making real differences for children today, to help build a better tomorrow for Malaysia," it said.

Below is the PMO's statement in full:



**AWARD TO DATIN SRI ROSMAH & PERMATA:
STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS SECRETARY**

20 September 2016

1. On 8 September 2016, Irina Bokova in her capacity as Director General of UNESCO sent letters to Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak, his wife Datin Sri Rosmah Mansor and Foreign Minister Dato' Sri Anifah Aman. The letters stated that Datin Sri Rosmah was to be given a special tribute award at an event co-hosted by UNESCO on 22 September 2016. This was in recognition of efforts undertaken by the Government of Malaysia to counter extremism through the educational system, and specifically the approach taken by PERMATA, founded in 2007 by Datin Seri Rosmah.
2. On 18 September 2016, Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations received an email from Professor Tudor Parfitt, Chairman of the Academic Advisory Board of the Organising Committee of the Tribute to Contributors to the Global Campaign against Violent Extremism. Professor Parfitt stated that the award would be deferred to 2017 because of what he called "interventions" from the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times regarding the funding of PERMATA.
3. We can confirm that PERMATA is wholly funded by the Government of Malaysia under an allocation transparently included in our annual Government Budget and approved by Parliament. All expenditures are in accordance with Government financial procedures. This is not only a matter of public record, but could have been immediately explained had we or PERMATA been asked before the award deferment.
4. Neither PERMATA, Datin Sri Rosmah or the Government of Malaysia ever applied for the award. The priority of PERMATA and Datin Sri Rosmah will always be the programmes that have had a positive impact on tens of thousands of young lives. To avoid any further distraction from this important work for the children of Malaysia, PERMATA and Datin Sri Rosmah have declined the proposed deferred award.
5. We deplore attempts to politicise the work of an exemplary organisation whose only aim is to improve the lives of children. And we regret that those who chose to bestow the award have given in to the smears and insinuations of some who are only focussed on their campaign against Malaysia, the Government, and the Prime Minister. Those behind this politically-motivated campaign care nothing for the damage caused by these false allegations to PERMATA, its staff and all the young people they have helped and cared for.
6. Neither PERMATA nor Datin Seri Rosmah will be distracted by people who cast false aspersions to undermine a noble cause. Their focus will remain on making real differences for children today, to help build a better tomorrow for Malaysia.

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