

Cabinet wants Chinese envoy to explain comments, says Zahid
The Malaysian Insider
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The Cabinet has asked China's ambassador to Malaysia Dr Huang Huikang to explain his criticism on racism and extremism at Petaling Street last week, The Star Online reported today.

The daily quoted Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi as saying that the Cabinet wanted to know if the envoy's remarks had been misconstrued.

Zahid said the Cabinet yesterday unanimously agreed that a statement should be made on the issue to stop all debate and polemic following Huang's remarks, which caused an uproar and provoked accusations of interference.

He said Huang had explained his statement when he met acting foreign minister Datuk Hamzah Zainuddin on Monday, as reported by several Chinese newspapers.

"However, the Cabinet was of the opinion that ambassador Huang should come up with an official explanation on the statement he made.

"This is to correct the perception, which has been given a negative connotation by certain opposition leaders and their social media," he was quoted as saying.

The news portal quoted Zahid as saying the envoy was one of the best ambassadors to have served in Malaysia.

"I deeply appreciate the contributions that he has made in fostering good relations between Malaysia and China," he was further quoted as saying.

Huang on September 25 had visited Petaling Street, a shopping strip in Kuala Lumpur dominated by ethnic Chinese traders, where he reportedly said Beijing was opposed to terrorism, extremism and any form of discrimination based on race.

His remarks were met with anger over the perception that China was interfering in Malaysia's affairs.

Following an uproar, the Chinese envoy said he never intended to meddle in Malaysia's domestic affairs and his statements in Petaling Street were blown out of proportion.

Petaling Street, popularly known as Chinatown, was the scene of chaos on September 16 when police had to use water cannons to disperse a crowd of "red shirt" protesters who wanted to force their way into the area. – October 1, 2015.

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