

Plan to make Rukunegara Constitution preamble changes tack

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BY ZURAIRI AR

Chandra Muzaffar said the 'Rukunegara Muqaddimah Perlembagaan' group has succeeded in two things from its campaign: bringing Rukunegara to the forefront of public discourse, and persuading the public to seriously reflect on the direction Malaysia is taking. — Picture by Yusof Mat Isa

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 — The group who proposed that Rukunegara be made preamble to the Federal Constitution may now change its strategy, after it continues to face uneasiness from the public even after over half a year of campaign.

[The group](#) called “Rukunegara Muqaddimah Perlembagaan” (RMP) said it is considering merely lobbying for the Malay Rulers to reaffirm their commitment to the national principles, and for the Parliament to adopt a motion reconfirming its position as the country’s guiding philosophy.

“This new strategy remains faithful to the larger goal of empowering the Rukunegara,” its head Chandra Muzaffar told *Malay Mail Online* in an interview this week.

In January, the group of seven activists had set a benchmark of up to April 30 to collect as many signatures as possible through its newly created website before submitting an application with the Conference of Rulers in hopes that it would advise the Cabinet and Parliament to act accordingly.

Ever since that, Chandra said it has sent the appeal to various groups including the Government and Opposition, and a number of NGOs.

In May, they reportedly collected at least 350 signatures, and Chandra said it has made attempts to get in touch with the Rulers and is still waiting for the outcome.

Chandra said the group has faced resistance from various groups, ranging from those who worry the proposal may undermine the position of Islam and the Malays, or those who do not see the compatibility between the Rukunegara and Constitution, and even those who are committed to the principles but are against setting it as a preamble.

“We have explained to all of them, we’ve tried to assuage their fears, clarified, and elucidated our position. Yet one could sense that beyond what is rational, there was sort of uneasiness in quite a lot of people,” Chandra related.

He said the new strategy will still aim to underline the importance of Rukunegara and affirm its goals and principles is the compass that will guide the nation, amid attempts by certain parties to subvert the Federal Constitution.

Regardless, Chandra said the group has succeeded in two things from its campaign: bringing Rukunegara to the forefront of public discourse, and persuading the public to seriously reflect on the direction Malaysia is taking.

He pointed at former minister Tan Sri Rais Yatim as an example of a detractor who have since come around to the group's thinking.

Earlier this month, the socio-cultural adviser to the Government said the Rukunegara should be constituted as the rule of law because the five principles are the pillars of the national philosophy to promote national unity.

For now, Chandra said RMP will continue lobbying for the initiative with the Malay Rulers and lawmakers, despite any possible change of course.

"We have decided to look at the other route. It does not matter as long as the Rukunegara is brought back ... This thing will go on," he said.

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