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Giving bigotry no sanction

Anushka Anastasia Solomon

Dec 7, 06 4:14pm

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In the recent publicly televised Umno general assembly, seasoned Malay politicians issued the following threats:

"Malay rights cannot be challenged, otherwise the Malays will run amok and the May 13 (1969) riots will happen all over again."

"The non-Malays are challenging us, it is time to raise our voices and defend the race and Islam."

"We are willing to risk lives and bathe in blood to defend our race and religion. Don't play with fire. If they mess with our rights, we will mess with theirs."

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There has been much unabashed criticism of the US and the Western world by Malay leaders in Malaysia. And yet, the non-Malay, non-Muslims in Malaysia do not have the immunities of citizenship and liberties of conscience that a just nation should accord all its citizens.

Religion has been repeatedly raised as a red flag to intimidate and curtail any meaningful dialogue with ethnic minorities in Malaysia. Given the threats articulated above, I am not convinced that all the fuss and fervour is about Islam as much as it is greed and aggrandisement of the Malay race.

Malaysian International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz publicly articulates the Malay position describing it as 'affirmative action' when in essence it is racial supremacy that the Malaysian government is striving for. Affirmative action is a policy or programme that seeks to redress past discrimination through active measures to ensure equal opportunity in education and employment.

Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak has an abysmal definition of 'past discrimination'. The *International Herald Tribune* quotes him as saying: "After 446 years of oppression, it is impossible that what is owed to the Malays can be repaid in a mere 20 or 30 years."

Hopeless. Both seasoned Malay leaders, male and female, demonstrate the deviant use of Western political terms to push their common agenda for Malay supremacy.

The tiny state of Malacca was under European rule for four centuries. The Straits Settlement, (Singapore, Penang, parts of Selangor) Sabah and Sarawak were under British rule for about 100 years. The rest of Malaysia was under the rule of Malay sultans during this period. How does this constitute 446 years of oppression for the Malay Muslims of Malaysia? And why on earth would a modern nation that seeks to move forward want to fabricate its history and manipulate it in this manner?

Current Malaysian policies, like South Africa's policies prior to 1995, aim to handicap, silence, and intimidate the non-Malay citizens of Malaysia. Rafidah Aziz's use of the term 'affirmative action' is diabolical and grossly inaccurate as it leads one to believe that Malays in Malaysia are

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disadvantaged and the minority.

This is simply not the case in Malaysia. Opportunities for business, education, the arts, and employment in Malaysia are wide open for Malay Muslims – who are the majority - and closed off for ethnic minorities and women. Affirmative action anywhere in the world has always been for the minorities.

The public face of multiracial, multicultural, and multi-religious Malaysia is Malay - a mask based on shameless racial politics.

It is time for world leaders to confront the policy of public victim-hood and private privilege adopted by the government of Malaysia in the procurement of business (arts and education/ transfer of technology) contracts with the international world and come alongside the ethnic minorities in Malaysia before any threatened blood bath.

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