

MALAYSIA RACIAL DISCRIMINATION REPORT 2021

PUSAT KOMAS



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Compiled and Prepared By:
PUSAT KOMAS
NON-DISCRIMINATION PROGRAMME
Malaysia

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Foreword

Racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia occur on a daily basis, impeding progress for millions of people around the world. Racism and intolerance if left unchecked will lead to the destruction of lives and communities. The Malaysia Racial Discrimination Report 2021 is an initiative by Pusat KOMAS to document and record the incidents of racial discrimination that have taken place in Malaysia. This seventh annual documentation is crucial in combating the problems of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia.

Malaysia has undergone a change of leadership once again in the year 2021. Under the leadership of both Tan Sri Dato' Muhyiddin bin Mohd. Yassin (until August 2021) and Dato' Sri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (since August 2021), Malaysia continues to see the use of race and religion as a political weapon by both political actors and public leaders. Even though both leaders have expressed their commitment to foster national unity, issues of race and religion basic principles of equality and non-discrimination continue to be denied. This has led to greater animosity among different ethnic groups in Malaysia.

This report captures and categorises the different instances where racism and racial discrimination occur. These trends may vary in scale from one another, but they are significant enough to be of concern. Despite these trends, several encouraging efforts and initiatives by Malaysians could be observed. These efforts demonstrated how racism and racial discrimination can be combated and prevented.

We are ever hopeful that the Malaysian government, political and public leaders could demonstrate an unequivocal political will and commitment to address the issue of race and religion that has plagued our country for decades. Immediate efforts need to be taken to ensure that the social fabric that binds us together does not collapse. Sloganeering will not foster harmony in multicultural societies; instead, genuine actions to ensure that all Malaysians are treated equally and with dignity will do so. We hope that this report would serve as an important document to inform the public about racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia, and inspire every Malaysian to come together to promote national unity for our beloved nation.

Dr. Ryan Chua
Programme Director
Pusat KOMAS

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Executive Summary

The 2021 edition of the Malaysia Racial Discrimination Report has observed the persistent expressions of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia. For several decades, Malaysians continue to suffer inequality and discrimination due to their race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin. The year 2021 has seen its fair share of inclusive policies and sloganeering aimed to embrace the spirit of inclusivity, unity, and respect among all Malaysians. However, these initiatives were undermined by hypocrisy, as the government trumpeted inclusivity and togetherness but reverted to the use of racial rhetoric to seize and maintain power. Race-based approaches towards policy planning continue to obscure class divisions which eventually perpetuate systems of inequality.

In 2021, there has been an increase of incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia. Based on the exploratory observation of incidents of racism and racial discrimination reported in the media, a total of 53 incidents of racism and/or racial discrimination were documented. These incidents were categorised into seven different trends of racial discrimination respectively:

1. Racial and Religious Politics
2. Racial and Religious Provocation
3. Racial Discrimination in the Education Sector
4. Racism in the Media and the Internet
5. Racial Discrimination in the Business Sector
6. Racism and Racial Discrimination in Other Sectors
7. Xenophobia

Meanwhile, a total of 61 efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia were identified. These efforts were categorised into two different trends which include:

1. Initiatives to Promote National Unity
2. Calling Out / Responding to Racial and Religious Injustices

This report also contains a special report on the “Social Media Monitoring Project on Racial and Religious Politics during the 2021 Melaka State Elections”. This monitoring project, done in collaboration with Zanroo Malaysia, monitored social media conversations during the Melaka state elections, from 1 to 22 November 2021.

The list of incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia documented in this report is not exhaustive of all the situations and problems experienced by all Malaysians, but it outlines a few broad trends in which racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia occur. These trends, of course, may vary in numbers from one to another, but they are significant enough to be of concern. As this report serves as an exploratory observation and compilation of incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia that have occurred in Malaysia, it should not serve as an index, but as an indication of the issues of racism in Malaysia.

The fight against racism begins with being informed. We believe that this report can serve as an important document to inform the public about racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia. Additionally, we hope that this report could spur new initiatives to identify ways to overcome this issue. This report is also intended to be an important tool to facilitate engagement with relevant stakeholders such as government agencies, political parties, education institutions, academicians and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The documentation of the incidents of racial discrimination would also be helpful to raise awareness and educate the public on the worrying state and extent of racial discrimination in the country. As this document also contains information on efforts to promote national unity, these efforts could be emulated and replicated by other stakeholders.

Key Concepts & Methodology

Principle of equality and non-discrimination	A principle which is proclaimed in the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): “ <i>All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights</i> ” ¹ and reiterated in international and regional human rights treaties. This report is grounded by this foundational principle.
Racial Discrimination	<p>Guided by the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), racial discrimination is defined as:</p> <p><i>“any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”</i>²</p> <p>In order to determine whether a particular action is considered to be racial discrimination, the action has to be assessed whether “<i>that action has an unjustifiable disparate impact upon a group distinguished by race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin.</i>”³</p> <p>However, special measures “<i>for the purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals’ equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights</i>”⁴ are not considered to amount to racial discrimination provided that such measures do not lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different groups, and are not continued once their objective has been achieved.</p>
Racism	There are no universally accepted legal definitions of the term

¹ Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

² Article 1, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

³ CERD, General Recommendation No. 14, paragraph 2. This includes practices that are non-discriminatory in their purpose but have a discriminatory effect. See CERD Concluding Observations on the initial, second and third periodic report of the United States of America, adopted by the Committee during its 59th Session (2001), U.N. Doc. CERD/C/59/Misc.17/Rev.3, on the “the persistence of the discriminatory effects of the legacy of slavery, segregation, and destructive policies with regard to Native Americans.”, available at:

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A%2f56%2f18\(SUPP\)&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A%2f56%2f18(SUPP)&Lang=en)

⁴ For further discussion on special measures, see: UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, General Recommendation No. 32, CERD/C/GC/32, 2009, available here: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=6&DocTypeID=11

	<p>racism. However, the most comprehensive provision on racism is highlighted by Article 4 of ICERD:</p> <p><i>“State Parties condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons of one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination.”</i>⁵</p> <p>The definition of racism in this report will be guided by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as set out in their publication Dimensions of Racism:</p> <p><i>“a construct that assigns a certain race and/or ethnic group to a position of power over others on the basis of physical and cultural attributes, as well as economic wealth, involving hierarchical relations where the ‘superior’ race exercises domination and control over others”.</i>⁶</p> <p>Racism is a broader experience and practice than racial discrimination. It is a deep-rooted belief where one group feels superior to another. It can be openly displayed in racial jokes, slurs or hate crimes. Racism can also be deeply rooted in attitudes, values and stereotypical beliefs.</p>
Xenophobia	<p>There is no internationally recognised legal definition of xenophobia. However, according to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, xenophobia is defined as:</p> <p><i>“behaviour specifically based on the perception that the other is foreign to or originates from outside the community or nation.”</i>⁷</p> <p>Xenophobia exists when “individuals are denied equal rights on account of real or perceived geographic origins of the said individuals or groups, or the values, beliefs and/or practices associated with such individuals or groups that make them</p>

⁵ Article 4, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)

⁶ International Labour Organisation (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), & Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2005). Racism and Migration. In K. Boyle (Ed.), Dimensions of Racism (pp. 111–134). OHCHR.

⁷ UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Report to the UN Human Rights Council on xenophobia, A/HRC/32/50, 13 May 2016, available here: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/32/50>

	<p>appear as foreigners or outsiders.”⁸</p> <p>Generally, xenophobia implies discrimination based on the perception of the other as foreign or originating from outside a community or a nation.⁹</p>
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METHODOLOGY

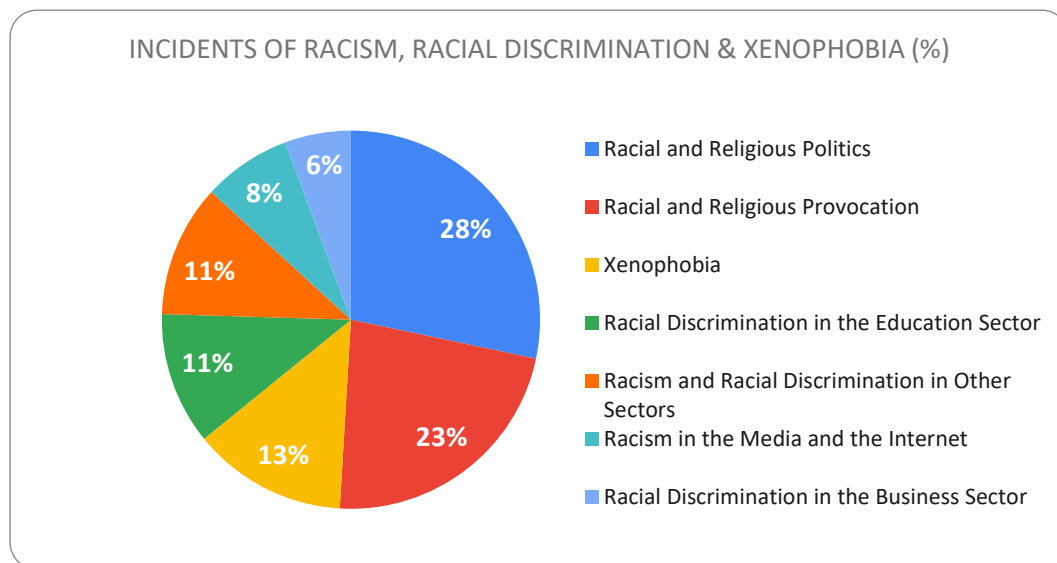
Incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and efforts to combat them are compiled from mainstream online media sources, Pusat KOMAS Report Racism mobile application and secondary sources such as accounts and views from individuals in social media.

These incidents were examined against the international standards of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia as well as Malaysia’s commitment at the international level. Additionally, these incidents illustrate violations to the basic rights enshrined in the Federal Constitution of Malaysia as well as the “National Principles”.

⁸ UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, Report to the UN Human Rights Council on xenophobia, A/HRC/32/50, 13 May 2016, available here: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/32/50>

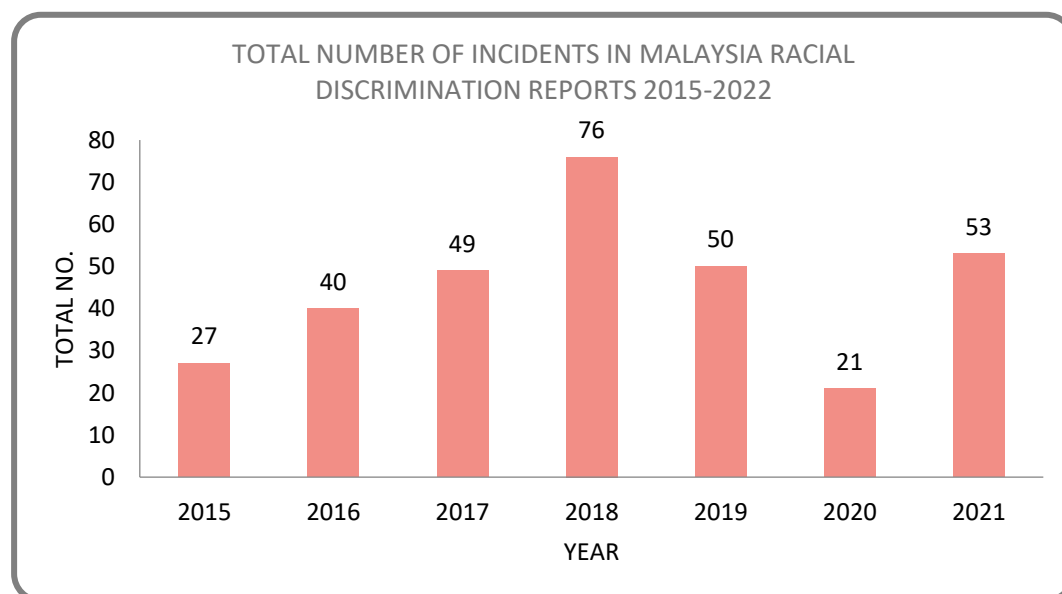
⁹ Inter-Agency (International Labour Office (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in consultation with UNHCR), International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia, August 2001, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49353b4d2.html>, page 2

Incidents of Racial Discrimination



Graph 1: Percentage of incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in 2021.

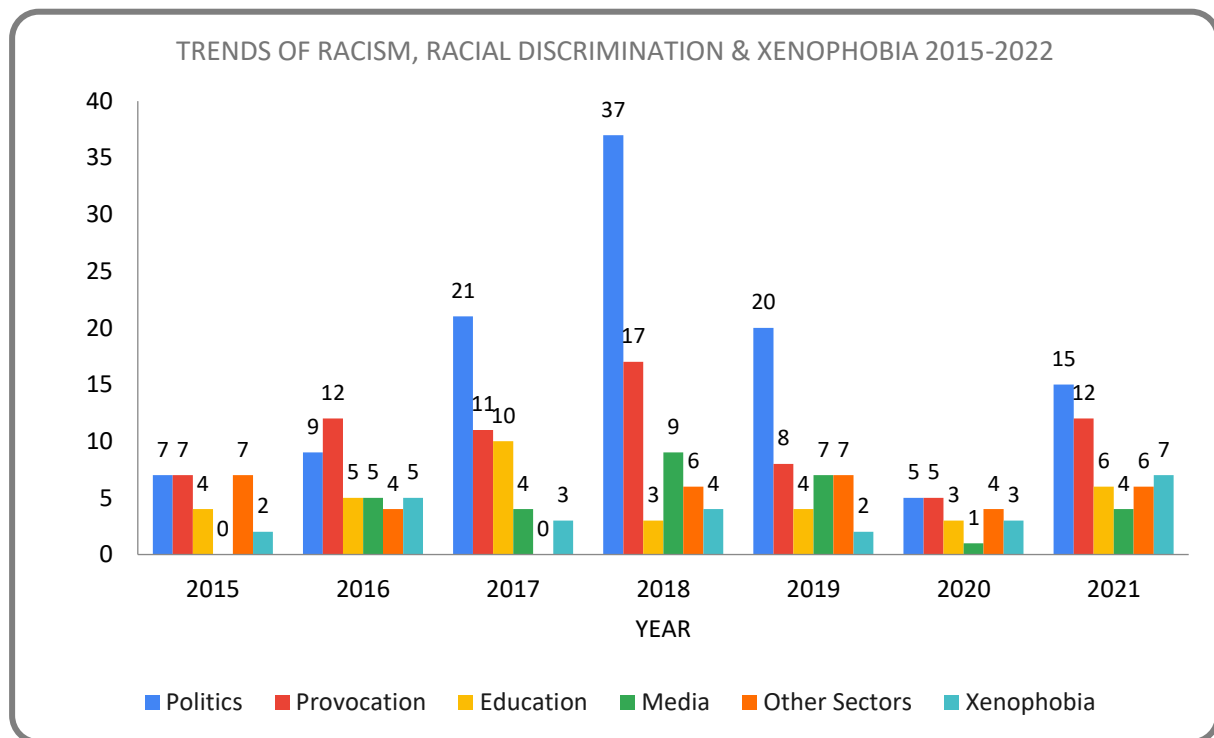
A total of 53 incidents were identified as either racism, racial discrimination or xenophobia (refer to Graph 1). The largest percentage of incidents identified were Racial and religious politics (28%), while the second largest percentage were Racial and religious provocation (23%), followed by Xenophobia (13%), Racial discrimination in the education sector (11%), Racism in other sectors (11%), Racism in the media and Internet (8%), and Racial discrimination in the business sector (6%).



Graph 2: Total number of incidents in Malaysia Racial Discrimination Reports from 2015 to 2022.

Comparing the total number of compiled incidents in our annual Malaysia Racial Discrimination Report over a period of seven years, the number of incidents has increased sharply from 21 incidents in 2020 to 53 incidents in 2021 (refer to Graph 2). This increase can be attributed to the gradual easing of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions

throughout the year, the eventual resumption of Parliamentary proceedings following the petition of civil society and opposition lawmakers, as well as state elections in Melaka and Sarawak. All these factors potentially contribute to an increase in interaction among people, which may lead to an increase in the expression of interracial hostility and tension. The fact that the number of incidents in 2021 rose even higher than in 2019 indicates that racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in the country have not receded after the first few phases of the COVID-19 pandemic but have quickly resumed previous levels and might have worsened. This development is concerning and warrants closer inspection.



Graph 3: Trends of incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia as reported in Malaysia Racial Discrimination Reports from 2015 to 2021.

Comparing the trends of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia over the same seven-year period, the pattern of trends in 2021 is quite similar to the patterns in 2019 and 2020, where Racial politics and Racial and religious provocation (formerly labelled as Racial and religious incitement) ranked higher in number of incidents compared to other trends (refer to Graph 3). In fact, Racial politics has ranked highest among all other trends over a five-year period (2017 to 2021) when Malaysia's government experienced numerous changes in rapid succession: from Barisan Nasional (BN) to Pakatan Harapan (PH), then to Perikatan Nasional (PN), and now to a 'Keluarga Malaysia' government. This pattern of trends indicates that the problem of racial politics is not only deep-rooted in Malaysia, but also that its severity is not determined by which government is in power.

Despite ranking the lowest in terms of number of incidents, the trend of Racism in the Media and the Internet is not to be overlooked. With the advancement of mobile technology and social media, coupled with the necessity of reducing face-to-face social interactions during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, social media has become a heavily populated platform for both public and private communication, which also makes it a

platform where expressions of racism and xenophobia, as well as support for or protest against racial discrimination are made salient.

Number of incidents of Racism and racial discrimination in the Education sector, Other sectors, and Xenophobia increased slightly from the previous year. In terms of education, both the content of the national curriculum and the structure of national primary education institutions were called into question in a way that was related to race and/or religion, which touched a sensitive nerve for members of the public as education is a topic of crucial importance for many. Other sectors in which incidents of racism, racial discrimination or xenophobia were reported include sports, health, and humanitarian assistance. Xenophobic sentiments and actions did not only come from authorities, but also from members of the public, which is not surprising given that the rise of xenophobia has occurred concurrently with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide.

Last but not least, the trend of Racial discrimination in the business sector is a new addition of 2021 in our annual report. In this trend, the announcement of several discriminatory policies claiming to boost the livelihood of certain disadvantaged groups requires attention.

RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS POLITICS

For decades, race and religion have been an effective tool used by politicians and political parties in Malaysia to advance their political agenda. Race and religion were used to gain political mileage and to ensure control over constituencies and voters. Politicians and political parties want to be known and regarded as the champions of their racial, ethnic and religious group. In this section, incidents where a race, ethnic and/or religious group is used by politicians and/or political parties to express a position of power and/or superiority over the others on the basis of physical and cultural attributes, as well as economic wealth were included.

1. **Ensure that UMNO has no more division - Ismail Sabri**

24 February 2021

United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) Deputy President, Ismail Sabri Yaakob urged party members to continue strengthening UMNO and avoid division. In a statement today, Ismail highlighted the importance of Malay unity in facing increasingly challenging political situations. He stressed that the Malay Bumiputera must unite because, whether they like it or not, they cannot deny that the 15th General Election is coming soon. He said that UMNO has to be strengthened and free of division because division will weaken the Malay race and lead to a repetition of PH's 22-month reign. The statement came at a time when internal strife in UMNO was said to be deteriorating.¹⁰

2. **PAS wants to cooperate with PN and MN to unite Malays, says Hadi**

19 January 2021

Abdul Hadi Awang, the president of Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) wants to cooperate with PN and Muafakat Nasional (MN) in order to unite the Malays and prevent the domination by non-Muslims.

The PAS president said that PN and MN have no choice but to unite if they want to win in the next general elections. He highlighted that they would prefer the coalition of Malay Muslims first and PAS would uphold PN and MN together to ensure that Malay Muslims will be united.

He claimed that "if the Malays split, then it will create, again, a situation where the non-Muslims will dominate, which is not aligned with the Muslim community (agenda) and will cause confusion."¹¹

3. **Minister: Do Hannah Yeoh and Fahmi Fadzil represent foreigners?**

29 January 2021

Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Ismail Sabri Yaakob has lashed back at several opposition lawmakers who questioned his statement that endorsed condominium managements asking their residents to submit a COVID-19 test report. Parti Keadilan Rakyat's (PKR) Lembah Pantai MP Fahmi Fadzil said the policy must be reviewed as it could discriminate against residents who could not afford to pay the testing cost, while Democratic Action Party's (DAP)

¹⁰ (Translation) Malaysiakini, "Umno perlu pastikan tiada lagi perpecahan - Ismail Sabri" 24 February 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/564231>

¹¹ The Malaysian Insight, "PAS wants to cooperate with PN and MN to unite Malays, says Hadi" 19 January 2021. See: <https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/s/296107>

Segambut MP Hannah Yeoh said the policy would be an inconvenience for tenants and implied that it was not based on a scientific method.

Taking to Twitter, Ismail said their statements were misleading and asked if both lawmakers were representatives for foreigners. "For Hannah Yeoh and Fahmi Fadzil, they are fighters for foreigners. To them, the cost which the foreigners will bear is more important than the lives of Malaysians. Maybe they are the people's representatives for foreigners, not Malaysians," he said.¹²

4. Cover their daily cost if you care so much about undocumented migrants, home minister tells human rights NGOs

8 April 2021

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin today mocked human rights advocates who questioned the government's shoddy treatment of detained undocumented migrants before deportation.

While taking questions during a news conference after launching the new national immigration system, Hamzah turned around and asked if NGOs were willing to cover the daily cost to house and feed the immigrants in the detention centres.

"It costs us about RM30 per head per day to care for them in the detention centres. If these NGOs care so much about these illegal immigrants, they should cover the cost. You can put them up in hotels if you like," he told reporters.¹³

5. MCA wants minister who 'empathises' with Chinese new villages

24 August 2021

Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) has urged the newly minted Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob to appoint a housing and local government minister who is sensitive to the needs of predominantly Chinese Malaysian new villages. "The prime minister has many new villages in his constituency of Bera, hence he will be able to comprehend and empathise with the frustrations of the new villagers when their network was disconnected or disrupted."¹⁴

6. Deputy Minister announces plan to draft law on spread of non-Muslim religions

9 September 2021

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Ahmad Marzuk Shaary had recently announced plans to introduce a legislation to restrict the growth of religions other than Islam. He told reporters that the government had plans to draft four new syariah laws, including the Control and Restriction on the Propagation of Non-Muslim Religions Bill. The proposal of said Bill was raised after the High Court in Kuala Lumpur ruled that non-Muslims can use the word "Allah".

¹² Malaysiakini, "Minister: Do Hannah Yeoh and Fahmi Fadzil represent foreigners?" 29 January 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/560899>

¹³ Malay Mail, "Cover their daily cost if you care so much about undocumented migrants, home minister tells human rights NGOs" 8 April 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/04/08/cover-their-daily-cost-if-you-care-so-much-about-undocumented-migrants-home/1964956>

¹⁴ Malaysiakini, "MCA wants minister who 'empathises' with Chinese new villages" 24 August 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/588471>

Marzuk said several other legislations such as the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965 (Act 355) will be amended under a five-year plan (2020-2025). These proposals were part of the government's plan to strengthen the syariah law in Malaysia, especially the federal territories.¹⁵

Many have demanded an apology from him, as well as clarification from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob. The Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) issued a statement saying that Ismail Sabri should step forward to offer clarification before it causes further anxiety among Malaysians.¹⁶

7. Pejuang needs to be race-based because of UMNO, says Dr M

6 October 2021

Dr Mahathir Mohamad has defended the need for race-based parties, saying that in Pejuang's case, it has to be so because it is expected to go up against UMNO, a Malay party.

The former prime minister who is also founder and chairman of Pejuang is expected to contest in rural areas where the population is largely Malay. "These people will not support a multiracial party. In the absence of any other Malay party, the rural people will vote for UMNO," Mahathir said that while there were other issues, race and money were "more important".

He also said other political parties in Malaysia were race-based because Malaysians insisted on identifying with their country of origin. "As long as we retain our identification with our countries of origin, politics and political parties in Malaysia will remain racial." In 2018, Mahathir defended the race-based strategy of Bersatu, of which he was then chairman, saying it was a realistic approach as Malaysians were still split along racial lines.¹⁷

8. Malays only need UMNO, says Mahdzir Khalid

9 October 2021

The Malays only need UMNO to represent them, according to its vice-president Mahdzir Khalid, saying that having many political parties would only divide them further.

"Only UMNO alone is enough, if we form many more parties, we (the Malays) will be further divided. "The Malays already have too many parties. Our Chinese and Indian friends do not have as many parties as the Malays have. "I do not understand what their objective is (in forming more new parties)," he said.¹⁸

¹⁵ Malaysiakini, "Law on spread of non-Muslim religions still in pipeline - deputy minister" 7 September 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/590288>

¹⁶ The Sun Daily, "Deputy minister criticised over statement on religion" 9 September 2021. See: <https://www.thesundaily.my/local/deputy-minister-criticised-over-statement-on-religion-CY8313712>

¹⁷ Free Malaysia Today, "Pejuang needs to be race-based because of Umno, says Dr M" 6 October 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/10/06/pejuang-needs-to-be-race-based-because-of-umno-says-dr-m/>

¹⁸ Malaysiakini, "Malays only need Umno, says Mahdzir Khalid" 9 October 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/594760>

9. Purported 'No bin' policy in Melaka

11 October 2021

It was speculated that the previous UMNO-Bersatu Melaka government had been practising a "No bin" policy where individuals whose names do not contain "bin" will not receive approval for whatever they apply.

In an eight-minute clip, a voice resembling Idris' is heard telling Ismail Sabri why he withdrew support for former Melaka chief minister (CM) Datuk Seri Sulaiman Md Ali. In the clip, Idris tells Ismail Sabri that UMNO will not receive widespread support in Melaka for the upcoming elections due to a "lack of leadership" and policies that only favour Malays.

"You know the most unpopular policy in Melaka, Mael (Ismail)? As a prime minister you will regret hearing this 'no bin' policy. This means any applications from Indians or Chinese (contractors) will be rejected outright."¹⁹

10. Racially lopsided division of resources for Budget 2022

29 October 2021

The presentation of Budget 2022 appeared to be racially biased with budget allocations amounting to billions of dollars for the Malays and Bumiputera but just millions to the Chinese and Indians.²⁰

In its presentation, the budget was presented to ensure that the agenda of strengthening the Bumiputera agenda continues to be prioritised. According to Tengku Zafrul, RM11.4 billion was allocated for the execution of multiple initiatives under the umbrella of Bumiputera development. From that amount, RM6.6 billion was allocated for educational facilities for Bumiputera children, such as MARA, UiTM and Yayasan Peneraju.

He announced that other than national programmes which benefit all people groups, as much as RM200 million would be allocated for the Chinese community for purposes such as renovation of houses and development of the new villages, access to finance for residents in new villages, as well as the Entrepreneur Financing Scheme for Small to Medium Enterprises.

For the Indian community, as much as RM145 million would be allocated for purposes such as programmes that strengthen the socioeconomic status of the Indian community, whereas RM274 million would be allocated for the Orang Asli community for purposes such as the Program Peningkatan Taraf Hidup Orang Asli which included subsidies, educational assistance as well as welfare assistance for almost 200,000 Orang Asli.²¹

The jarring difference between the budget allocation had raised concerns with Subang MP Wong Chen calling the government to narrow the income gap regardless of race. He stated that, "The government has to be more responsible when allocating funds. It is not logical to give more help to rich tycoons such as Syed Mokhtar Albukhary while there are not enough

¹⁹ The Vibes, "No support in Melaka for Umno': audio clip apparently of PM, Idris Haron makes rounds" 11 October 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/44270/no-support-in-melaka-for-umno-audio-clip-apparently-of-pm-ex-cm-idris-haron-makes-the-rounds>

²⁰ The Malaysian Insight, "Revise Budget 2022 to make it fair to all races, says Wong Chen" 2 November 2021. See: <https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/index.php/s/348907>

²¹ (Translation) Astro Awani, "Bajet 2022: RM11.4 billion disediakan untuk pembangunan Bumiputera" 29 October 2021. See: <https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/bajet-2022-rm114-bilion-disediakan-untuk-pembangunan-bumiputera-328012>

funds for the Chinese woman dishwasher or the Indian despatch rider.”

However, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob denied the allegations by Wong Chen that Budget 2022 had racial elements. He explained that Wong might have made such a statement because he failed to understand the whole content of Budget 2022.²²

11. A loss if non-Malays have no representation in Melaka govt - Rafiq

17 November 2021

Melaka PN chief Mohd Rafiq Naizamohideen said it would be a loss for the non-Malay community if they have no representation in the next Melaka government. Rafiq noted that many in the non-Malay community have previously supported PH but he believes that the coalition would now have no chance of winning in this state election.

"In my opinion, if the Chinese community wants their representative to be in the (next state) government, they need to support Gerakan. "Without Malay support, I do not see how Harapan can return to power in Melaka. And thus, it is not strategic for the non-Malays to throw their weight behind Harapan as they would only add an opposition voice in the State Legislative Assembly," Rafiq claimed that the position of the Malays had been "threatened" when Harapan was in power. He said the non-Malay community needs to have representatives in the state executive council to attend to matters related to their interests that are discussed in the exco meetings.

Meanwhile, Noor Effandi Ahmad who was sacked from Bersatu criticised Rafiq for playing the race card, "I believe we are no longer living in a time when we (can) play politics of racial sentiment in front of the Malays, but then we say something else in front of the Chinese". He then accused Rafiq of "running away" knowing that he would not be able to gain the non-Malay support.²³

12. Pacific pact will hinder pro-Bumiputera policies, says Mukhriz

27 November 2021

Bumiputera rights will be "controlled, regulated and limited" if the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is ratified by Malaysia, Pejuang president Mukhriz Mahathir said today.

He disputed a government assurance that Bumiputera rights would remain protected if the pact is ratified. "For example, there is no exemption given to the provisions relating to 'fair and equitable treatment' or 'expropriation'. Both can be used to challenge affirmative action policies, including those afforded to Bumiputeras." He said the country's various policies to develop Bumiputeras, such as through government procurement, vendor selection by government-linked companies and ownership regulations, "would be constrained by the CPTPP which has implications for the economy and social harmony in Malaysia".

He disputed an assurance by international trade and industry minister Azmin Ali that Malaysia reserved the right to maintain assistance measures for Bumiputeras so long as they

²² (Translation) Astro Awani, "Bajet 2022 | Tiada unsur perkauman dalam Bajet 2022" 3 November 2021. See: <https://www.astroawani.com/video-malaysia/bajet-2022-tiada-unsur-perkauman-dalam-bajet-2022-1933185>

²³ Malaysiakini, "Sacked Bersatu man blasts ex-boss for playing race card" 17 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/599649>

do not affect existing licence holders.²⁴

13. Dr M uses chopstick example to lament challenges in assimilating non-Malays

12 December 2021

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has used the example of the Chinese community using chopsticks to highlight the challenges in assimilating the non-Malay population in the country.

"They (Chinese in Malaysia) preserve their own community, their own customs, their own ways. For example, the Chinese eat with chopsticks retaining an identity with China, they don't eat with their hands. They have not adopted the Malaysian way of eating food."

He also said that there is still a tendency for these communities to identify themselves with their country of origin, despite being born and raised in Malaysia. As a result, it had resulted in separation among the people. He then stated, "Because of this identity with race on the ground among the people, you cannot have a multi-racial party that is trusted by everyone."

However, he noted that there are many Indians and Arabs who "become Malays" by sacrificing their own ethnic identities to adopt the Malay language, customs and names and they were accepted by the Malays. However, others do not want to identify themselves as Malays and this has created a problem.

Meanwhile, Mahathir also claimed that, unlike their great-grandfathers who came to Malaya, the younger generations of Chinese were born in Malaysia but yet still maintain links to China. "So this divides the people. This is the Chinese Malaysian, this is Indian Malaysian, this is Malay. Because of that, they cannot be assimilated. In other multi-racial countries, once they adopt citizenship of a country they identify themselves only with that country and no longer with where their grandfathers came from," he said.²⁵

14. No 'new dawn' until Dayak can hold CM's post, says Kit Siang

16 December 2021

Until the Dayak can once again envision one of their own in the CM's post, there will be no new and improved future for Sarawak, DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang said today. He noted that the state's first two CMs, Stephen Kalong Ningkan and Tawi Sli, were both Dayak, but "since then, the office of Sarawak CM seems to have slipped out of Dayak hands".

"When can a Dayak become a Sarawak CM again? Nobody knows. But at present, it seems to have become an impossible dream," the Iskandar Puteri MP said in a statement today.²⁶

²⁴ Free Malaysia Today, "Pacific pact will hinder pro-Bumiputera policies, says Mukhriz" 27 November 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/11/27/pacific-pact-will-hinder-pro-bumiputera-policies-says-mukhriz/>

²⁵ Malaysiakini, "Dr M uses chopstick example to lament challenges in assimilating non-Malays" 12 December 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/602745>

²⁶ Free Malaysia Today, "No 'new dawn' until Dayak can hold CM's post, says Kit Siang" 16 December 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/12/16/no-new-dawn-until-dayak-can-hold-cms-post-says-kit-siang/>

16. PSB vows to elect a Dayak CM if they win in Sarawak

16 December 2021

PSB will nominate a Dayak CM if they are mandated to form the state government and acquire adequate representation of Dayak heritage.

Talking to the press in Sibu today, Wong Soon Koh, PSB President, stresses that the party is a multiracial party while the fact remains that a majority of PSB's election candidates out of 70 candidates are made up of Dayak.

"If we want a Dayak CM, turn out and vote for PSB. If we receive full support from the Dayak community - Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu - it will be a clear indication for us to nominate a Dayak CM. In other words, if you want a Dayak CM, you must vote for PSB" Wong added.

Following up from the matter, the push for a candidate from the Dayak community for the CM post has been viewed by Datuk Seri Alexander Nanti Linggi, Secretary General of GPS as an attempt to stir racial sentiments. He says that the selection of any candidates to hold such positions will be made based on merit. He also added that "I think let us not politicise this issue as it is just merely an attempt to stir racial sentiments".²⁷

²⁷ (Translation) Suara Sarawak, "Dayak calon Ketua Menteri hanya sentimen perkauman" 17 December 2021. See: <https://suarasarawak.my/2021/12/dayak-calon-ketua-menteri-hanya-sentimen-perkauman/>

RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS PROVOCATION

Deliberate attempts by groups, agencies and/or individuals that perpetuate racial or ethnic superiority. Any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of their ethnicity, nationality, race, colour and/or descent are included in this section. Instances where religion infringes the rights of a person of another racial or ethnic group were also included in this section.

1. Negeri Sembilan Islamic enforcer spot-check famous Kuala Pilah kopitiam just for having Muslim patrons

9 January 2021

The Negeri Sembilan Islamic Religious Affairs Department (JHEAINS) said yesterday it conducted a spot-check on a (non-Muslim) kopitiam located at Kuala Pilah, following complaints that the premise is frequented by many Muslim patrons.

JHEAINS' official Facebook page read, "Our checks found out that the premises did not employ any Muslim cooks and the cooking ingredients used were not certified halal." Following its findings, JHEAINS urged Muslims to avoid patronising food premises with no halal certifications.

Harian Metro reported, JHEAINS admitted that the shop does not fall under its jurisdiction which only covers Muslim-related issues, nor does it have any power to stop Muslims from having their meals there. However, they claimed that they can only provide their advice to Muslims and urge them to stay away from patronising premises owned by non-Muslims without any halal certification. They added that, "Muslims should choose premises which possess halal certificates issued by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia to have their meals." However, it is not a Shariah offence for Muslims to eat and frequent non-certified diners, and many Malay-Muslim-owned outlets, especially small stalls, do not hold halal certifications too.²⁸

2. Agent provocateurs launch online jihad against 'liberal' Malays, non-Muslims

30 March 2021

A new group of self-proclaimed "highly educated" and religiously conservative Facebook users with fake accounts have launched a crusade against moderate and liberal netizens, using offensive arguments to debate and counter their beliefs.

Calling itself No Nonsense Netizens (N3), members of the informal Islamic group have been wading into comment sections of popular news pages to attack "liberal" Malays and non-Muslim users with provocative remarks.

Nora Ree who claims to be a former non-Muslim declared N3 as a non-partisan "Muslim sisterhood, shield maidens and enforcers of karma". N3 promised to be a "nightmare" for

²⁸ Malay Mail, "Negri Sembilan Islamic enforcer spot-check famous Kuala Pilah kopitiam just for having Muslim patrons" 9 January 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/01/09/negri-sembilan-islamic-enforcers-spot-checks-famous-kuala-pilah-kopitiam-ju/1938767>

non-Muslims and “liberal” Muslims who are “uncordial or undiplomatic” in their comments.²⁹

3. Bodyguards allege they were beaten, threatened with gun for fasting by non-Muslims
14 April 2021

A 43-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of making threats to two (Muslim) men with a gun and caning the two men as he was allegedly unhappy they were fasting. Photos and copies of a police report on alleged abuse of two of his bodyguards went viral on social media.

Dang Wangi police chief Mohamad Zainal Abdullah said the incident happened at a condominium in Jalan Pinang at about 11pm last night, when the man asked the complainant and a colleague whether they were fasting.

Zainal said after they replied that they were fasting, the man scolded them and slapped the complainant on the head. The two bodyguards then followed the suspect to his house in Klang, Selangor, where they were beaten with a cane by his other staff, with the suspect also threatening them with a gun.³⁰

4. Commentary on the differences between the aid from a Malay Muslim and a Chinese Christian
16 April 2021

Kamarazul Zaman Haji Yusoff in a commentary in Harakah Daily questioned the intentions of the media for sensationalising the news of a Chinese Christian providing aid to a Malay Muslim. He claimed that the the story of a Chinese Christian providing aid to a Malay Muslim Foodpanda worker was intentionally sensationalised immediately (which eventually garnered 29,000 shares in social media and reported in various media portals), while the story of a Malay Muslim handing out the same aid to a Malay Muslim Food Panda was not viralised.

He subsequently claimed that people began congratulating the Chinese Christian for his good deeds without realising that the ulterior motive of the Chinese Christian was to garner publicity for a particular interest. He then questioned that, since there are other Chinese Christian or other Chinese who also live in poverty, why would the assistance to a Malay Muslim be selected and sensationalised.³¹

5. Chindian man treated rudely by restaurant staff despite clarifying he wasn't fasting
23 April 2021

Daniell Denis went to a famous fast food restaurant in Taman Sutera, Johor Bahru to have breakfast with a friend. While they were ordering from the restaurant's touchscreen menu, a staff walked up to him and said, "If you are Muslim, you cannot eat here."

²⁹ The Vibes, "Agents provocateurs launch online jihad against 'liberal' Malays, non-Muslims" 30 March 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/22183/n3-launches-online-jihad-against-liberal-malays-and-non-muslims>

³⁰ Free Malaysia Today, "Bodyguards allege they were beaten, threatened with gun for fasting" 14 April 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/04/14/bodyguards-allege-they-were-beaten-threatened-with-gun-for-fasting/>

³¹ (Translation) Harakah Daily, "Beza antara bantuan Melayu Islam dan bantuan Cina Kristian" 16 April 2021. See: <https://harakahdaily.net/index.php/2021/04/16/beza-antara-bantuan-melayu-islam-dan-bantuan-cina-kristian/>

Daniell answered that he was not, and the staff left. When they continued to order, the same staff approached him again and asked him, "Are you sure that you are not Muslim? If you are Muslim, please just take away."

Daniell said he was initially fine with the questioning, as he knew it was the staff's job to stop Muslim diners from eating on their premises during Ramadan; however, while waiting for his food, the staff came once again to his table to tell him, "If you are Muslim, can you please just take away?"

Not being able to stand the treatment he was receiving anymore, he whipped his identification card out of his wallet to prove his ethnicity to her.³²

6. Consumer Association worried Non-Malays used Malay name in online food businesses 19 May 2021

The Malay Consumers Association of Malaysia (PPMM) President, Che Hassan Che Johan had suggested for online food vendors to be vetted by state religious and local authorities. He proposed for the government to provide a guideline for these restaurants before they are allowed to be listed as online vendors. He added, "The authorities, especially the local Islamic departments need to assess whether they have followed the guidelines before their brands are approved".

The statement was made after a claim about a restaurant owned by a non-Malay used a Malay-like name on a mobile application for food vendors. Social media users have called out the act as confusing to users who are conscious about the halal status of the food that they have ordered.³³

7. PAS Sabah accused Baratas of insulting Islam 10 June 2021

PAS Sabah has accused a local supermarket, Baratas, of insulting the sensitivity of the Muslim community by not separating shopping trolleys. The accusation came from a PAS state assemblyman, Dr. Aliakbar Gulasan, on Monday after the trolley issue in Bataras Keningau went viral.

"I am of the opinion that this is an insult to the sensitivities of the Muslim community! The local supermarket should be understanding of religious issues or refer to religious authorities first."

Dr. Aliakbar also praised the netizen who viralised the trolley issue for proactively solving the issue at hand. "I advise everyone in Sabah to be more sensitive and cautious in their business activities, especially supermarket businesses."

The trolley issue in Bataras Keningau went viral recently when a netizen named Muhammad Haziq Ab Rahman, an avid supporter of PAS from Kelantan, questioned the decision of Bataras Keningau to sell pork without separating shopping trolleys.

³² SAYS, "Chindian Man Treated Rudely By Restaurant Staff Despite Clarifying He Wasn't Fasting" 23 April 2021. See: <https://says.com/my/news/chindian-man-treated-rudely-by-restaurant-staff-despite-clarifying-he-wasnt-muslim>

³³ (Translation) Malaysiakini, "Persatuan bimbang peniaga makanan bukan Melayu guna nama Melayu" 19 May 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/575271>

After Haziq's post was shared by PAS supporters and went viral, the management of Bataras contacted Haziq and took action to separate the trolleys.³⁴

8. "It hurts to say it, but Malaysian 'ustaz' spoke the truth", says NGO

5 October 2021

A local preacher, Syakir Nasoha has offended non-Muslims and the Muslims in a clip that has gone viral, by claiming that non-Muslims are clamouring to kill Muslims.³⁵ Several police reports had been lodged against the preacher³⁶; however, Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs (ACCIN) chief executive officer Jamal Shamsudin, did not disagree with Syakir Nasoha. Jamal claimed that Syakir spoke some truth as the "Muslims are oppressed and killed in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Xinjiang (China), Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Kashmir (India), Afghanistan and many other places." He added that extremist sentiments among Hindus, Buddhists and Zionist Christianity are also prevalent here in Malaysia. However, he felt that the authorities are more concerned about Muslim extremists rather than the non-Muslim ones.³⁷

9. Selama District bans retail of alcohol

4 November 2021

State assemblyman of Selama, Perak, Mohd. Akmal Kamarudin said that retail sales of alcohol will not be allowed in any business premises in Selama beginning next year, as per the decision of the Selama District Council. Akmal claimed that the prohibition is a collective decision by all parties including local residents who want this action taken.³⁸

10. Convert all of UDA Holdings Bhd's land bank to 'wakaf' land to only benefit Bumiputera and Malays, Penang group tells Putrajaya

23 November 2021

All lands owned by UDA Holdings Bhd (UDA) should be converted into "wakaf" or reserve land to make sure they fully benefit only Bumiputera and Muslims, said Penang Malay Association (Pemenang) president Tan Sri Yussof Latiff in a press conference at Pemenang headquarters here.

"In this case, the only way to stop this from happening, all lands owned by UDA should be classified as wakaf land to make sure these lands will only benefit the Muslim and Bumiputera communities," he said.

He said UDA can choose to join ventures with Bumiputera-owned companies to develop its mega projects.

³⁴ (Translation) Ini Sabah Bah, "PAS Sabah Tuduh Bataras Menghina Agama Islam" 10 June 2021. See: <https://inisabahbah.com/pas-sabah-tuduh-bataras-menghina-agama-islam/?lang=ms>

³⁵ Politik Semasa (YouTube Channel), "Terperangkap dalam video: Pendakwah Islam Ustaz Syakir Nasoha meremehkan Hindu, Buddha dan Dayak" 2 October 2021. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M0vykNH_rV8

³⁶ The Vibes, "'Arrest Syakir Nasoha now': police reports on preacher's viral clip flood in by the thousands" 3 October 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/43438/arrest-syakir-nasoha-now-police-reports-on-preachers-viral-clip-flood-in-by-the-thousands>

³⁷ The Rakyat Post, "'It Hurts To Say It, But Malaysian 'Ustaz' Spoke The Truth", Says NGO" 5 October 2021. See: <https://www.therakyatpost.com/news/malaysia/2021/10/05/it-hurts-to-say-it-but-malaysian-ustaz-speaks-the-truth-says-ngo/>

³⁸ (Translation) Kosmo, "Selama larang jual minuman keras" 4 November 2021. See: <https://www.kosmo.com.my/2021/11/04/selama-larang-jual-minuman-keras/>

He said he did not want these lands which rightfully belonged to the Bumiputera and Malay community be lost to non-Bumiputera.³⁹

In responding to the statement, UDA said today it was committed to upholding the responsibility it has been entrusted with, which is assisting Bumiputera, especially in terms of property ownership and participation within urban areas.

“The company has played its role in developing urban areas since the beginning of its formation until now. This effort is in line with the government’s intent to balance socio-economies in urban areas and further intensify urbanisation.”

The company also responded to Pemenang’s claims that UDA had bought land in Tanjung Tokong at a minimal price, which was developed for other purposes that do not benefit the Bumiputera community at all.

It clarified that all the original residents (also known as former Temporary Occupation Licence holders) were given free residential units as part of their resettlement.

On claims that UDA had joint-ventures with non-Bumiputera companies to develop high-rise buildings and mixed-development projects that are mostly bought and owned by non-Bumiputera, the company explained it was one of its initiatives to maintain long-term operational sustainability.

“Since 1996, UDA has not received any financial assistance from the government. “Therefore joint-venture developments between UDA and other companies is one of the initiatives aimed at assisting UDA in the continuity of business operations. “While at the same time, UDA has to strike a balance between profit and its responsibility in empowering Bumiputeras,” the company said.⁴⁰

11. NGO urges to put a halt on selling of liquor in Kuala Kangsar

22 December 2021

Eight NGOs have urged the local authority in Kuala Kangsar (MPKK) to put a stop to the selling of liquor in convenience stores in Kuala Kangsar.

Izam Jamiri Baharin, the Chair for Jalinan Kasih Islamiah Kuala Kangsar said that the call was made as liquor is easily made available in the town while majority of the people in Kuala Kangsar are Muslims. He also added that most of the workers in the convenience stores are also Muslims.

A week after the statement, MPKK mentioned that they will enforce the ban of liquor in all convenience stores located in Muslim majority neighbourhoods starting from 2022.

“MPKK has the power in licensing that allows us to set requirements to forbid selling of

³⁹ Malay Mail, "Convert all of UDA Holdings Bhd's land bank to 'wakaf' land to only benefit Bumiputera and Malays, Penang group tells Putrajaya" 23 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/11/23/convert-all-of-uda-holdings-bhds-land-bank-to-wakaf-land-to-only-benefit-bu/2022968>

⁴⁰ Malay Mail, "After claims by Penang Malay group, UDA Holdings Bhd says committed to assisting Bumiputera in terms of property ownership within urban areas" 23 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/11/23/after-claims-by-penang-malay-group-uda-holdings-bhd-says-committed-to-assis/2023096>

intoxicating drinks whether they are beer or liquor. What it means is that people (non-Muslims) in the community who wish to acquire the alcoholic beverage can obtain it outside of the (prohibited) area and consume it in their own houses in order to prevent disruption due to their drunkenness (sic)," he added.⁴¹

12. Bank rejects cheque from church because it's "not halal"

27 December 2021

A cheque issued by a church was rejected by Bank Muamalat in Seremban as it was deemed "not halal".

Sin Chew reported that the issue came to light when a Seremban-based Chinese charity group, Wah Chai Association, tried to deposit a Maybank cheque for RM1,500 at Bank Muamalat. The cheque was issued by the Agape Community Church to pay for remedial works at Lee Sam Road Chinese Cemetery in Seremban. Because the bank did not have a checking machine, they tried to deposit the cheque over the counter. The bank informed the association that the cheque could not be accepted on grounds that it was "not halal".

The association then sought the help of Lobak state assemblyman Chew Seh Yong who accompanied its members to the bank. They tried to deposit the cheque again, but the cheque was rejected because the cheque was "not halal".⁴²

⁴¹ (Translation) Harian Metro, "MPKK mula larangan jual minuman keras di kawasan majoriti Islam" 31 December 2021. See: <https://www.hmetro.com.my/mutakhir/2021/12/794555/mpkk-mula-larangan-jual-minuman-keras-di-kawasan-majoriti-islam>

⁴² The Rakyat Post, "Bank Rejects Cheque From Church Because It's "Not Halal" 27 December 2021. See: <https://www.therakyatpost.com/news/malaysia/2021/12/27/bank-reject-cheque-from-church-because-its-not-halal/>

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Education can be a means to retain as well as eliminate inequality. It can reinforce or diminish inequality. Racial and religious discrimination in education may also breed stereotypes and prejudices. Any incident where any person or group is deprived or limited to obtain equal treatment in education (e.g., access to all types and levels of education, standard and quality of education) or is given conditions which are incompatible with the dignity of a person is placed under this category.

1. Derogatory slur in official dictionary definition sparks controversy

22 March 2021

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) (a government body responsible for coordinating the use of the Malay language and Malay-language literature in Malaysia) was criticised for the use of the derogatory term, “keling” to refer to the Indian community on its website recently.

Indian community activist S Shankar Ganesh criticised DBP over the definition of the word “tambi” on the Department’s website that used the word “keling” in reference to the Indian community. DBP defined the word ‘tambi’ as: “a term used for Keling people younger than us.” For the uninitiated, the word “keling” is a pejorative term to the Indian community.

However, DBP referred to the Kuala Lumpur High Court ruling that allowed the use of the word in the dictionary as it was not malicious to any parties. Despite the official explanation, many social media users expressed their anger over the use of such an insensitive and disparaging word to describe an ethnic group.

To put an end to the controversy, DBP Director-General Abang Sallehuddin Abg Shokeran told *Malaysiakini* that the department will replace the word “keling” with the word “Indian”.⁴³

2. Teachers’ group wants apex court to decide legality of vernacular schools

7 April 2021

A Muslim teachers’ group has filed an application seeking the Federal Court’s judgment on the constitutionality and legality of Malaysian vernacular schools (schools where the medium of education is in the native language).

Ikatan Guru-Guru Muslim Malaysia is referring to the Federal Court the question of whether Sections 17 and 28 of the Education Act 1996, which allow the minister in charge of education to establish vernacular schools, violate Article 152 (1)(a) of the Federal Constitution.

The applicant also seeks to clarify whether the words “official purpose” in Article 152, held by the Federal Court in the case of *Merdeka University Bhd v Government of Malaysia* (1982) to apply to institutions of higher learning, apply equally to primary and secondary schools.

⁴³ Malay Mail, “DBP backs down, will replace derogatory slur towards the Indian community after social media uproar” 22 March 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/life/2021/03/22/dbp-backs-down-will-replace-derogatory-slur-towards-the-indian-community-af/1960049>

Article 152, which states that Malay is the national language of Malaysia, goes on to state that the medium of instruction in government institutions should be Malay.⁴⁴

In December, the High Court rejected the lawsuit, affirming that vernacular schools are consistent with the Federal Constitution. Justice Datuk Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali in his summary judgment said that the Federal Constitution, in fact, expressly protects the teaching in mother tongues in schools other than Bahasa Malaysia.⁴⁵

3. "This is Malay land, contents of history textbook should not be disputed"

12 April 2021

In response to a historian's criticism of the latest edition of secondary school history textbooks, BERJASA Womens' Chief, Ustazah Siti Kalsom Hussin claimed that no one should dispute the contents of the history textbooks which prioritise the introduction of the Malay and Islamic civilisation in the country. She reasoned that because the peninsula is known as the 'Land of the Malay', the glory of the Malay and Islamic civilisation should be documented and taught to Malay children who are the heirs to the throne of this land. She also claimed that the other ethnic groups are not mentioned in detail because they are side characters in this country; since the history of non-Malay ethnic groups in the 19th and 20th century had been already included by 'unity-minded' national history scholars, they should not be asking for more in this country.⁴⁶

4. Ethnic Indians have the worst experience of discrimination in schools

16 September 2021

A recent survey by the Sekolah Semua youth movement has revealed that more ethnic Indians in Malaysia felt that they suffered from discrimination in the country's education system compared to other ethnic groups.

The survey — titled "Discrimination in Education Survey" — found that nine in 10 ethnic Indian respondents or 87% said they felt discriminated in schools because of their ethnicity alone, followed by skin colour (69%) and religious beliefs (65%). Around three-quarters of them pointed to teachers as the source of their experience of discrimination (74%) or their peers (73%).

The survey also found that 54% of ethnic Indian respondents said they suffered verbal discrimination, followed by 40% who said they were denied access to opportunities because of their identity compared to other ethnic groups. 92% of the same group of respondents also said no investigation or action took place after reporting their experiences of perceived discrimination to authorities.

A total of 2,441 responses were polled in the survey carried out nationwide from September 1 until 10 aimed at exploring public experiences of perceived discrimination during the

⁴⁴ Free Malaysia Today, "Teachers' group wants apex court to decide legality of vernacular schools" 7 April 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/04/07/teachers-group-wants-apex-court-to-decide-legality-of-vernacular-schools/>

⁴⁵ Malay Mail, "Court rules vernacular schools constitutionally protected, throws out Malay-Muslim group's suit" 29 December 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/12/29/court-rules-vernacular-schools-constitutionally-protected-throws-out-malay/2031761>

⁴⁶ Ismaweb, "Ini Tanah Melayu, memang wajar didokumentasi dalam buku teks Sejarah" 26 April 2021. See: http://ismaweb.net/2021/04/26/ini-tanah-melayu-memang-wajar-didokumentasi-dalam-buku-teks-sejarah/?fbclid=IwAR2WXWA5f1_QOr06Pj8eoDheJ7zD6jALuHo0biTmP0iR2euJqMsUVtql-dc

respondents' time in Malaysian schools. "While anecdotes of experiences of discrimination are widespread in public discourse, little to no data have been systematically collected to estimate the extent of discrimination in the Malaysian education system."⁴⁷

5. Malay and Jawi script signboards supplied to SJK(C) schools

28 November 2021

The Pahang education department had supplied signboards with the names of the SJK(C) Yoke Hwa and SJK(C) Kee Wha in Malay and Jawi script, but not in Chinese characters.⁴⁸

National unity minister Halimah Mohamed Sadique has declined to comment on the issue of two Chinese primary schools in Pekan, Pahang, receiving new signboards devoid of Chinese characters. When asked whether excluding Chinese characters was in line with national unity, Halimah responded by saying that Malay was the national language.

She added that, "Since this matter involves the education department, I think we should get the response from the ministry and the state government". However, deputy education minister Mah Hang Soon was reported to have instructed the education department to design new sign boards for vernacular primary schools with Chinese or Tamil scripts, while allowing the existing signages to remain.⁴⁹

6. Make Malay customs, culture an academic subject in schools, tertiary institutions in Malaysia, says Rais Yatim

7 December 2021

The government should take cognisance of Article 160 of the Federal Constitution by making Malay customary and cultural practices an academic subject in schools and higher learning institutions, said Dewan Negara president Tan Sri Rais Yatim.

He said this was to ensure that these practices be assimilated by the people to augment their own civilisation.

"I suggest that the government pay attention to this matter to ensure that Malay cultural values are not lost, especially among the younger generation."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Malay Mail, "Survey: One in two Malaysians faced discrimination in schools, ethnic Indians had worst experience" 16 September 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/09/16/survey-one-in-two-malaysians-faced-discrimination-in-schools-ethnic-indians/2006075>

⁴⁸ MY Sin Chew, "SJK(C) signages to include school names in Chinese" 1 December 2021. See: <https://mysinchew.sinchew.com.my/20211201/sjkc-signages-to-include-school-names-in-chinese/>

⁴⁹ Free Malaysia Today, "Unity minister mum on SJK(C) signboards" 28 November 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/11/28/unity-minister-mum-on-sjkc-signboards/>

⁵⁰ Malay Mail, "Make Malay customs, culture an academic subject in schools, tertiary institutions in Malaysia, says Rais Yatim" 7 December 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/12/07/make-malay-customs-culture-an-academic-subject-in-schools-tertiary-institut/2026740>

RACISM IN THE MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

Media plays an essential role in giving readers, viewers and listeners insights into and an understanding of the backgrounds, cultures and religions of people from different ethnic groups. However, it can also become a tool to promote false images and negative stereotypes of vulnerable individuals or groups, which inadvertently contributes to the spread of xenophobic and racist sentiments among the public. Similarly, the Internet has become a platform for racist, violent and extremist groups to exploit this issue. Therefore, incidents online that assign a certain race and/or ethnic group to be of a position of power over the others on the basis of physical and cultural attributes are included in this section.

1. Malaysian singer Haoren's use of brownface in music video sparks anger

26 January 2021

Malaysian singer Haoren has come under fire for using brownface in his recent music video *White Doll*.

The plot of his music video was about a schoolgirl whose skin became dark after walking to school every day. Several scenes show the girl being taunted by her classmates and the bullying only stops after she uses a beauty product that whitens her complexion. The actress playing the schoolgirl, online influencer Qiu Wen, had make-up slathered on her face and body in order to achieve a darkened appearance.

Haoren plays the role of the girl's secret admirer in the music video, and he passes her a range of gifts, including the skin whitening product, to help her skin become lighter.

The act has been widely branded as brownface, a form of make-up commonly used by light-skinned performers to negatively portray people from Latin America, South Asia, or Southeast Asia.⁵¹

2. Jijoe was *jakun* posing in front of the bridge

29 August 2021

Datuk Azizulhasni Awang, the Tokyo Olympic 2020 keirin silver medallist had used the term "*Jakun*" (an Orang Asli sub-ethnic groups) in a recent Instagram post highlighted, "I don't care if people want to label me as *jakun*, but I feel so proud to have taken a picture in front of the Terengganu Drawbridge." His post had drawn criticism from an Orang Asli activist, Shaq Koyok who expressed his disappointment that Azizulhasni was irresponsible for associating *Jakun* to being ancient and backwards.⁵²

3. Malaysian politician makes racist comments against Kisona Selvaduray

3 October 2021

Malaysian women's singles player Kisona Selvaduray became a victim of racist comments from a Malaysian politician after she lost her matches in the ongoing Sudirman Cup.

⁵¹ Malay Mail, "Malaysian singer Haoren apologises but continues to justify brownface in 'White Doll' MV" 26 January 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/showbiz/2021/01/26/malaysian-singer-haoren-apologises-but-continues-to-justify-brownface-in-wh/1944099>

⁵² (Translation) MSN, "Jijoe jakun 'posing' depan jambatan" 29 August 2021. See: <https://www.msn.com/en-my/news/sukan/jijoe-jakun-posing-depan-jambatan/ar-AANRoeJ>

Borhan Che Rahim who is reportedly a politician wrote on his Facebook profile status, "From which estate did BAM find this Indian (keling) and make her Malaysia's main player."

The word 'keling' is a derogatory term used against people with dark skin colour in Malaysia.

The Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) has issued an official statement regarding this incident that read "BAM is utterly appalled by the racist remarks made towards our national women's singles player, S Kisona and pledged to fight for the eradication of racism in sports, especially in the realm of badminton."⁵³



Image taken from Weird Kaya⁵⁴

4. On Racist Statement: Sabah FC to lodge police report 31 October 2021

Social media users were found to have racially attacked N Thanabalan on Sabah Football Club's (Sabah FC) Facebook fan page. Sabah FC released the statement after a social media user commented ⁵⁵on striker N Thanabalan on Sabah FC's fan page⁵⁶. They stated that they take racist comments seriously, especially those aimed at its players on social media.⁵⁷

⁵³ Badminton360, "Malaysian politician makes racist comments against Kisona Selvaduray". 3 October 2021. See: <https://360badminton.com/news/malaysian-politician-makes-racist-comments-against-kisona-selvaduray/>

⁵⁴ Weird Kaya. "Kelantan Bersatu Leader Apologises To M'sians And Resigns Over Racist Remarks Towards Kisona" 4 October 2021. See: <https://weirdkaya.com/borhan-che-rahim-bersatu-leader-apologises-msians-resigns-racist-remarks-kisona/>

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⁵⁶ Sabah FC, 31 October 2021 See: www.facebook.com/sabahfcofficial/posts/3093501304230315

⁵⁷ (Translation) Daily Express, "Kenyataan berbau perkauman: Sabah FC akan buat laporan polis" 31 October 2021. See: <https://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news/180739/kenyataan-berbau-perkauman-sabah-fc-akan-buat-laporan-polis/>

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE BUSINESS SECTOR

Racial discrimination is still a common problem in the business sector. While some of the more blatant forms of racial discrimination may have faded, many remain, while others have taken on new or less visible forms. Any policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination which demonstrate offensive behaviour at work by co-workers or managers towards a person of another ethnic group, bias in recruitment or promotion, denial of a business licence and equal business opportunities made on the basis of race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin were included in this section.

1. Introduction of 51% Bumiputera rule for freight forwarders

22 September 2021

An association of freight forwarders has urged the government to clarify its position on Bumiputera equity in logistics companies, with only months left before an end-of-year deadline.

Instead, the Federation of Malaysian Freight Forwarders (FMFF) has proposed that the requirement – possibly calling for a 51% Bumiputera ownership of their companies – be deferred to the end of next year.

The federation's president Alvin Chua said former prime minister Najib Razak had announced a revision of Bumiputera equity requirements in 2018 and said it would be reviewed again at the end of 2020. However, that has yet to materialise.

In a letter dated Sept 18 to the government, Chua said the finance ministry had stated in January that all Customs brokerage licence holders must comply with Bumiputera equity requirements, but did not set any figure.⁵⁸

This decision has also invited responses from political leaders from both sides of the divide. Kedah Bersatu information chief in responding to the former Finance Minister, Lim Guan Eng who claimed that the move was unconstitutional and unfair, urged the public to oppose DAP because it was blocking the "bumiputera agenda". He also stated that, "As a country with the bumiputera as its core, we are compelled to work towards increasing the equity ownership of the bumiputera."⁵⁹

2. 12MP: Only Bumiputeras will be able to buy Bumi firms, shares, says PM

27 September 2021

Bumi-owned companies and shares can only be sold to fellow Bumiputera consortiums, firms and individuals, as the government bids to further empower the community under the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said a safety net framework will be introduced to ensure sustainable equity ownership. He added that the ownership and disposal of Bumiputera companies will soon be regulated by the relevant ministries and agencies,

⁵⁸ Free Malaysia Today, "Freight forwarders call for clarity on 51% Bumiputera rule" 22 September 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/09/22/freight-forwarders-call-for-clarity-on-51-bumiputera-rule/>

⁵⁹ Malaysiakini, "Kedah Bersatu: DAP's take on freight forwarder bumi equity must be opposed" 24 September 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/592622>

namely, a Bumiputra Prosperity Division.

Ismail Sabri said the country has to date failed to achieve its target of Bumiputeras owning 30% of corporate equities. As of 2019, he added that equity ownership among this group only makes up 17.2%, with non-Bumiputeras owning 25%, foreign investors with 45.5% and the remaining 12.3% are nominal ownership.

Citing Article 153 of the Federal Constitution – which guarantees the position of, and special quotas for, the Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak – Ismail Sabri gave his assurance the Bumiputera agenda will not be sidelined by the government.

Other than the policy on the sale of Bumiputera shares, Ismail Sabri said the implementation of home-ownership quotas will be strengthened through closer cooperation between federal, state and local governments.⁶⁰

3. PM announces plans for Bumi quotas in malls and ‘strategic locations’, says in line with ‘Keluarga Malaysia’
18 November 2021

The government has proposed quotas for Bumiputera-owned businesses in strategic locations such as shopping malls as part of efforts to increase the community’s participation in the economy, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob. He then said the quotas would be managed transparently and fairly, so that its ultimate goal can be achieved in line with the aspirations of Keluarga Malaysia.

“Also discussed were issues relating to Bumiputera involvement in large scale national projects such as 5G, Digital Bank, government-linked companies (GLC) and government-linked investment companies (GLIC) procurement policies and issues relating to low Bumiputera equity.

“In addition, the meeting also discussed the percentage of asset ownership by Bumiputera, particularly in housing ownership and commercial premises,” he said. He said that the presence of Bumiputera businesses in prestigious malls and tourist hotspots was still low due to the high rental rates even though some of these establishments are owned by GLCs.⁶¹

⁶⁰ The Vibes, "12MP: Only Bumiputeras will be able to buy Bumi firms, shares, says PM" 27 September 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/42787/12mp-only-bumiputeras-will-be-able-to-buy-bumi-firms-shares-says-pm>

⁶¹ Malay Mail, "PM announces plans for Bumi quotas in malls and ‘strategic locations’, says in line with ‘Keluarga Malaysia’" 18 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/11/18/pm-announces-plans-for-bumi-quotas-in-malls-and-strategic-locations-says-in/2021902>

RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN OTHER SECTORS

Racism and racial discrimination occur in different spheres and levels of society. This section includes incidents of racism and racial discrimination that are not captured in the categories above. These categories include racism and racial discrimination in the following sectors, but not limited to, health, humanitarian assistance and sports.

1. Football played marred by 'monkey' chants

28 February 2021

Ifedayo Olusegun, a Nigerian-Bahraini professional footballer who was playing for Malaysia Super League Club, Selangor Football Club (Selangor FC) was racially abused during a recent match. It was reported that unruly fans, outside the Kuala Lumpur Football Association (KLFA) Stadium, chanted 'monkey' that was directed to Selangor's Ifedayo Omosuyi after Selangor's defeat to KLFA.⁶²

It was highlighted that this incident was not the first and will not be the last despite anti-racism campaigns by international and local football governing bodies. Foreign players of African origin and locals from minority groups have often alleged at being on the receiving end of racist remarks.⁶³

2. Sketchy racial encounters with the police force

7 May 2021

The death of A. Ganapathy while in police custody has renewed debate on racial discrimination by members of the force. While former inspector-general of police Tan Sri Musa Hassan has insisted that policemen do not discriminate along racial lines, the accounts from three Indian men were different.

Law graduate Vimal Subramanian, 28, is well-versed in police procedures. He recalled being remanded by the authorities while waiting for his father in Bangsar in 2018. "I believe I was targeted because I was a dark-skinned Indian standing next to my motorcycle," Vimal told The Vibes on the incident that took place in Jalan Maarof. "The police officers then told me to perform a urine test. As a law graduate, I knew they couldn't do that and that it was wrong," he said. The police subsequently threatened to take him to the police station even though they do not have a lawful reason to do so.

Similarly, a netizen who requested anonymity said he was a victim of racial profiling when a police patrol car stopped and asked him what he was doing when he was warming up his car about 4 am in the morning. The officer alleged that, "You're an Indian in front of a big house, and also in a big car". They demanded for his identification card, which he refused to surrender and subsequently threatened to detain him. It was only until he replied to the police that they could go ahead and arrest him, while reminding them that sometimes, the folk in big houses are lawyers that they drove off. He also claimed that at that time, he was even dressed in office attire.⁶⁴

⁶² New Straits Times, "KL win Caring Cup marred by 'monkey' chants" 28 February 2021. See: <https://www.nst.com.my/sports/football/2021/02/669621/kl-win-caring-cup-marred-monkey-chants>

⁶³ The Vibes, "JDT: No room for racism in Bangsa Johor football" 4 March 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/sports/19509/jdt-no-room-for-racism-in-bangsa-johor-football>

⁶⁴ The Vibes, "Bad cops? 3 Indian men share their sketchy encounters with police" 7 May 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/26413/bad-cops-3-indian-men-share-their-skechy-encounters-with-police>

3. Proposal to ensure medical graduates especially from Bumiputera to serve as permanent officers

27 June 2021

In a proposal submitted to the government by the Malaysian Public Health Medical Association (PPPKAM) and the Malaysian Islamic Doctors Association (PERDIM), the government should review the recruitment of new medical graduates to serve in MOH. The view is proposed to ensure that medical graduates, especially among Bumiputeras, can serve on a permanent basis and further reduce the unemployment rate in the professional field in the country.⁶⁵

Health Minister Dr Adham Baba, in responding to the proposal by both PPPKAM and PERDIM, stated that the ministry would consider the proposal given by the medical groups. Even though MOH later clarified that the minister's statement has been misinterpreted as supporting pro-Bumiputera policy in medicine, when the controversial statement merely explained the purported proposal by PPPKAM and PERDIM, the statement issued by MOH to "meneliti" (examine) had caused confusion on the ministry's stand on racial hiring policies in the health care sector.⁶⁶

4. JB grocery store caught discriminating against Indians while giving out food aid

28 July 2021

A grocery store in Johor was met with controversy after putting up a sign at a food bank that discriminated against Indians. The sign read, "Indians not allowed to take food aid for the time being." In the viral clip, an Indian man wearing a blue T-shirt can be heard saying, "We received information from the public that there are free food items being given out but it is stated that it is not meant for Indians. It is only for Malays and others. None for Indians. Now we're here to solve the problem."

A representative of the shop that was in the video explained, "We serve all members of the community without taking into account race or religion. That's a stand we've taken all this while and before this, a lot of people have come to take items from the food bank. It has never been an issue." Another store manager affirmed stating there was a mistake.

"We had other issues but we apologise and we've removed it, so now anyone is allowed," he added.⁶⁷

5. Malaysia refuses to allow Israelis at world squash event

25 November 2021

Malaysia is refusing to grant visas for Israeli players to participate in a major squash tournament next month, the sport's governing body says, sparking anger in the Jewish state.

It is the latest instance of the Southeast Asian nation, which has no diplomatic relations with Israel, attempting to bar athletes from the country. The World Team Championship for men

⁶⁵ (Translation) Utusan Malaysia, "Lantikan pegawai perubatan harus telus, tidak prejudis - MMA" 27 June 2021. See: <https://www.utusan.com.my/berita/2021/06/lantikan-pegawai-perubatan-harus-telus-tidak-prejudis-mma/>

⁶⁶ CodeBlue, "PPPKAM denies suggesting bumiputera priority for doctor jobs" 28 June 2021. See: <https://codeblue.galencentre.org/2021/06/28/pppkam-denies-suggesting-bumiputera-priority-for-doctor-jobs/>

⁶⁷ SAYS, "JB Grocery Store Caught Discriminating Against Indians While Giving Out Food Aid" 28 July 2021. See: <https://says.com/my/news/jb-grocery-store-called-out-for-discriminating-against-indians-while-giving-out-food-aid>

is due to take place in Kuala Lumpur from December 7-12, with 26 squads participating. But the World Squash Federation (WSF) said it had "been made aware that, at present, the Malaysian authorities have not accepted yet to provide visas for the Israel squash team."

"The WSF is committed to the principle of open and inclusive world championships in which all member nations who wish to participate are welcome to do so," the governing body said.

The WSF added that it is in contact with Malaysia's squash body and hoped that "a fair and practical solution can be achieved."

The Israel Squash Association said it plans to turn to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland if the WSF can't resolve the issue.

"It's a shame that they are mixing sports with politics," association chairman Aviv Bushinsky told AFP. "Those who close their eyes – all the countries that participate and let something like that happen – they allow racism and discrimination to take place in sports." ⁶⁸

6. Back home, Sri Muda residents question 'selective rescue'

21 December 2021

Uvarajan, a resident in Taman Sri Muda (an area worst hit by flood), claimed that rescue efforts by boat were carried out selectively among residents in the area, with alleged political considerations by those in power.

He stated that, "People are suffering, you know? In 1996 when this (flooding) happened, the army was deployed and they did a great job."

David, another victim of the flood also narrated a similar experience of alleged selective boat rescue. He stated that "Water was in the house, I had to find my own boat and pay for it. I saw a (rescue) boat passing through, I called for help... I have a one-year-old son. The boat picked up their passengers and kept telling me to wait. Finally, I called my relative who arranged for a boat to come and I paid RM 2,000 for it. I needed to protect our lives."

He also claimed to be unsure of who was in charge of the official rescues, "the Malays came for the Malays, the Chinese came for the Chinese, what can we Indians do? (We're) finished, just look at them".⁶⁹

⁶⁸ New Straits Times, "Malaysia refuses to allow Israelis at world squash event" 25 November 2021. See: <https://www.nst.com.my/sports/others/2021/11/748689/malaysia-refuses-allow-israelis-world-squash-event>

⁶⁹ Malaysiakini, "Back home, Sri Muda residents question 'selective rescue'" 21 December 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/604023>

XENOPHOBIA

Attitudes, prejudices and behaviours that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perceptions that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity are included in this section. These actions are often aimed at foreigners and outsiders due to their ethnic and national origins. They are denied equal rights on account of real or perceived geographic origins of said individuals or groups, or the values, beliefs and/or practices associated with such individuals or groups that make them appear as foreigners or outsiders.

1. Management forces foreign tenants to undergo COVID-19 test

21 January 2021

Migrant workers living in an apartment in Kuala Lumpur are required to submit their COVID-19 test results to the management and those who do not, would be barred from entering the premises.

However, a spokesperson for the Cheria Heights Apartment management denied that the ruling discriminated against the workers.

According to a notice given to these residents that was sighted by *Malaysiakini*, all migrant workers living in Cheria Heights must do a COVID-19 PCR test. Apart from the test results, the management also wanted copies of their passports and photographs. If they failed to submit these documents by Jan 31, the notice stated, security personnel would bar them from entering the apartment.

One migrant worker from the apartment told *Malaysiakini* that he felt “targeted”.

When *Malaysiakini* visited the apartment yesterday, there was a notice at the guardhouse, which read: “All foreign workers must provide their COVID-19 test results to the management office before entering”.⁷⁰

2. Why is the state government not doing anything about the Rohingya who are dominating Meru Market?

24 January 2021

The President of the Hawker’s Minority Association, S. Gobi Krishnan had expressed his unhappiness that the Selangor state government was not willing to address the issue of illegal immigrants in the Meru Market.

He mentioned, “The public knows that most of these Rohingya migrants are holders of fake UNHCR cards and in addition to that they are not workers at the market but they have rented shop lots from local merchants.”

“This issue is a public secret, but it is puzzling as to why the Klang Municipal Council and the State Government do not know it,” he said. According to Gobi, the Rohingya have taken over the businesses in Meru Market from the local sellers and the same predicament has happened to most of the markets in the state such as in Selangor Wholesale Market in Seri Kembangan. “Please take the Kuala Lumpur Wholesale Market as an example for you, it is

⁷⁰ Malaysiakini, "Management forces foreign tenants to undergo Covid-19 test" 21 January 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/559880>

just bordering Selangor anyway. As of now, we can proudly say that there has not been even one foreign seller in the Kuala Lumpur Wholesale Market since last year.”⁷¹

3. Customer complains that they don't feel "safe" at KL cafe because of foreign staff

25 January 2021

A Malaysian customer has recently come under fire after complaining about feeling "unsafe" at a cafe in Kuala Lumpur. The customer, who has since removed the post, left a review saying that they felt unsafe because Foo Foo Fine Desserts is operated by five foreign workers. "Haven't been there for a while and it saddens me that this premium dessert outlet has been degraded relative to a wholesale Selayang market." The customer also messaged the cafe owners to share the same feedback. In response, one of the owners explained to the customer that their staff are mild-mannered and excellent workers who have been with them for several years. "Please be assured they're there to work, not to make you feel unsafe, for reasons unbeknownst to us," they added. It appears that the customer has since deleted their social media accounts.⁷²

4. Migrants sprayed with disinfectant during raid

10 June 2021

The Immigration Department conducted a mass disinfection exercise to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during an integrated operation at a migrant settlement in Cyberjaya. A video taken during the raid that has since gone viral on social media showed immigration officers spraying a liquid — later identified as Dettol — directly onto the immigrants' heads and hands. The Immigration Department later posted its own video on Twitter showing its officers also getting sprayed with Dettol. Its director-general Datuk Khairul Dzamee Daud said the immigrants were from Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar and India. This included 12 women and two children.⁷³

5. Residents voice out their thoughts on Rohingya living among them

16 June 2021

For residents of the Terubok flats here, the presence of the Rohingya among them can be rather unsettling at times. The resident association president Mohamed Ibrahim Syed Ibrahim lamented, "Sometimes, they (the Rohingyas) act as if they are the citizens here and we are the outsiders instead."

He said that if locals pointed out any wrongdoing committed by a Rohingya, the latter would not take heed. "They will point out that they are UNHCR cardholders and neither we nor the authorities can do anything about it," he claimed.

Mohamed Ibrahim alleged that residents were worried because fights among the Rohingya had been occurring regularly. "When they fight, they will wave parang and knives around. It's scary if you witness it," he added.

⁷¹ (Translation) Malaysia Gazette, "Rohingya kuasai Pasar Besar Meru, kenapa kerajaan negeri tengok sahaja?" 24 January 2021. See: <https://malaysiagazette.com/2021/01/24/rohingya-kuasai-pasar-besar-meru-kenapa-kerajaan-negeri-tengok-sahaja-mbc/>

⁷² SAYS, "Customer Complains That They Don't Feel 'Safe' At KL Cafe Because Of Foreign Staff" 25 January 2021. See: <https://says.com/my/news/customer-complains-unsafe-kl-cafe-because-foreign-staff>

⁷³ Malay Mail, "Migrants sprayed with disinfectant during raid" 10 June 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/06/10/health-experts-spraying-migrants-with-disinfectant-unscientific-defence-aga/1980991>

Another resident, M. Kumar said the presence of the Rohingya also posed several economic challenges to the locals. "They will undercut local contractors and take jobs for a much lesser pay," he claimed, adding that local youths had to move elsewhere to find work.

At Taman Sutera, Surash Kumar, who is a tuition centre owner, alleged that several Rohingya in the area were drug pushers and addicts. "We have closed the places which had become their 'port' (gathering place), but they will find a new place for their activities," he said.

Freelance funeral service provider Mak Chee Wah said his concern with the refugees was their poor hygiene, saying, "They have a habit of littering, which has caused our flats to become dirty."⁷⁴

6. Why blame Pulau Gaya for all Sabah's cases?

1 August 2021

The villagers at Pulau Gaya have criticised Kota Kinabalu MP Chan Foong Hin for blaming the island for the cause of Sabah's sudden spike in COVID-19 cases.

Chan suggested that the surge of COVID-19 cases in Sabah could be attributed to the 69 residents who fled from Pulau Gaya to escape an enhanced MCO imposed earlier this month. He stated that, "I suspect they ran away from the enhanced MCO area because they were migrants without proper documentation. Pulau Gaya is a hotspot for undocumented migrants." He added that a lot of the enhanced MCO areas were shophouses in the Kota Kinabalu town centre, where migrants usually resided. Therefore, it is likely that the 69 people who fled Pulau Gaya sought refuge at friends' places in these shophouses, resulting in these clusters. He then claimed that the unfair distribution and late delivery of vaccines contributed to this issue.⁷⁵

However, Hasriani Abdul Hassim, a local leader of Pulau Gaya, refuted Chan's statement, calling it racist and prejudicial, as well as unsupported by any report of scientific data from the Ministry of Health (MOH) or Royal Malaysian Police.⁷⁶

7. Foreigner restricted from entering mosque, netizen laments

27 November 2021

Netizens expressed regret at the incident of the management of a mosque barring a foreigner from entering the mosque, citing that only locals could enter the mosque. A photograph of the foreigner leaving after being stopped from carrying out Friday prayers in the mosque - despite queuing earlier than local worshippers - went viral on social media today.

A Twitter user Azboroi said that the foreigner was not allowed into the mosque, not because he did not have the MySejahtera app to log in, but because the management of the mosque

⁷⁴ The Star, "Residents voice out their thoughts on Rohingya living among them" 16 June 2021. See: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/06/16/residents-voice-out-their-thoughts-on-rohingya-living-among-them#.YMIItHEA547Q.twitter>

⁷⁵ Malaysiakini, "Sabah hospital turns tunnel into ward to treat Covid-19" 30 July 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/585151>

⁷⁶ The Borneo Post, "Why blame Pulau Gaya for all Sabah's cases?" 1 August 2021. See: <https://www.theborneopost.com/2021/08/01/why-blame-pulau-gaya-for-all-sabahs-cases/>

decided to keep the quota for local worshippers.

"This brother is a foreigner, and he was not allowed to carry out Friday prayers. Anyone who says that Islam in Malaysia knows no race and skin colour is a liar." His Twitter thread continued "This happened right in front of me. This brother arrived slightly earlier than me, I queued behind him. He didn't even check in with MySejahtera but (the management) instantly asked, "You're a foreigner, right? Foreigners cannot enter, only locals."⁷⁷

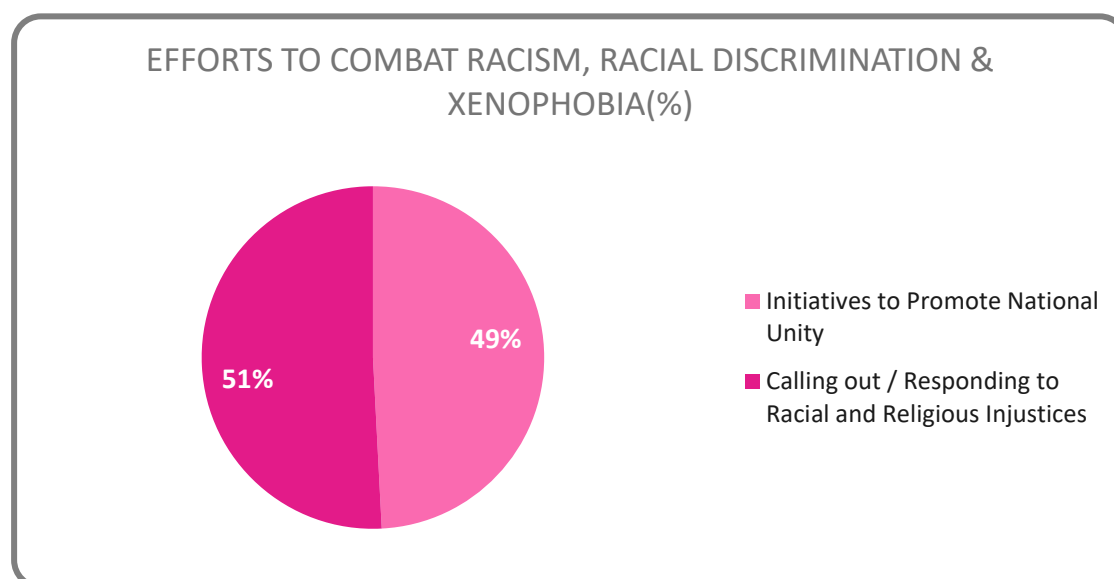


Image taken from Twitter⁷⁸

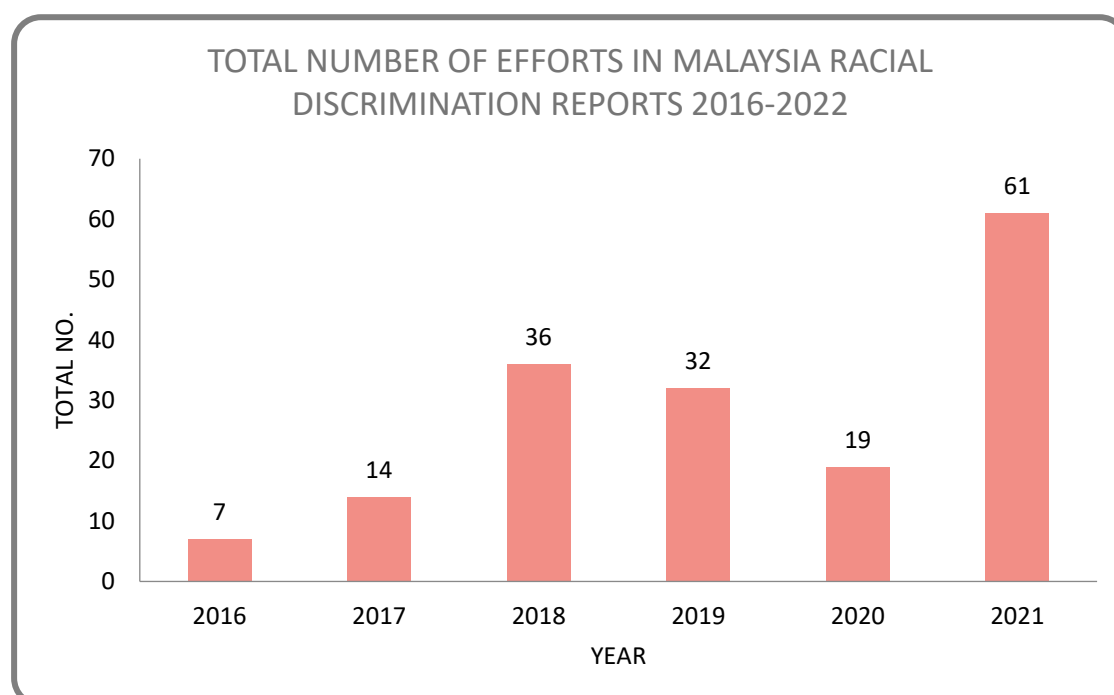
⁷⁷ (Translation) Utusan Malaysia, "Warga asing dihalang masuk masjid, netizen luah kekesalan" 27 November 2021. See: <https://www.utusan.com.my/terkini/2021/11/warga-asing-dihalang-masuk-masjid-netizen-luah-kekesalan/>

⁷⁸ Azboroi, 26 November 2021. See: <https://twitter.com/azboroi/status/1464094847459991557?lang=en>

Efforts to Combat Racism, Racial and Religious Discrimination



Graph 4: Percentage of incidents of efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in 2021.



Graph 5: Total number of efforts to combat racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia Racial Discrimination Reports from 2016 to 2022.

Contemporary forms of racism and racial discrimination are complex and disturbing. Despite the persistent expressions of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, several initiatives were identified to combat them. Out of 61 incidents of such efforts, 49 percent were initiatives that promoted national unity whereas the remaining 51 percent were instances of

calling out and responding to racial and religious injustices (refer to Graph 4). The number of efforts recorded in 2021 also greatly increased from 2020 (over 300%) and is significantly higher than the previous highest number of recorded incidents in 2018 (refer to Graph 5). These actions are encouraging signs that demonstrate the people's fight against racism and racial discrimination in the country.

INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY

This section documents any effort and/or initiative by individuals, groups, politicians, and/or political parties to promote national unity and social cohesion.

1. Unity and harmony - Key to nation-building

1 January 2021

Unity and harmony, good governance and combatting false information on COVID-19 vaccines should be the country's top priorities for 2021. Malaysia Unity Foundation trustee Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said unity and harmony were key to the success of nation-building.

"In their New Year messages, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah and Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin stressed the need for unity and harmony to face the multiple challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The government has also identified five priorities for 2021, which includes improving public health, strengthening the economy, reinforcing political stability, upholding the nation's sovereignty, and strengthening ties between races and religions. However, we cannot achieve unity just by sloganeering but through the government's implementation of fair and just policies to benefit all Malaysians.⁷⁹

2. Web comic 'Fatah dan Farah' attempts to tackle racial discrimination

28 January 2021

Novelist Faisal Tehrani and comic illustrator Arif Rafhan Othman collaborate on a soul-searching project, web comic *Fatah dan Farah*, on the issue of racial and cultural identity. According to Faisal Tehrani, the collaboration aimed to bring forth dialogues on racial, cultural, gender identities and status of Malaysian society, especially on the youths.

"The purpose of Fatah dan Farah is to take a good look at various human identities and try to understand them. When I say 'understand', I do not mean to fight or conquer them, but to understand all the differences to avoid being discriminatory or hostile. Lately, it has become a difficult conversation to have due to bigotry of certain beliefs including religious, cultural or political beliefs. But Malaysians are better than this," he said.

The famous novelist also mentioned that the dialogue on identity in the web comic was meant to alert the youths about the problem of racial prejudice in the country.⁸⁰

3. On self-reflection and righting what is wrong: Haoren releases a revised version of *White Doll*

6 February 2022

After a period of self-reflection, Malaysian singer Haoren re-recorded the song *White Doll* and re-shot the music video. He said, "What's wrong needs to be made right. I have learned a lot through the new version of this song and so I hope that the good things I have learned will be conveyed to everyone as well."

⁷⁹New Straits Times, "Unity and harmony - key to nation-building" 1 January 2021. See:

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2021/01/653750/unity-and-harmony-key-nation-building?>

⁸⁰ (Translation) Malaysiakini, "Web comic 'Fatah dan Farah' attempts to tackle racial discrimination" 28 January 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/hiburan/560745>

The remake of the song and music video was supported by his sponsor. Due to MCO 2.0, only one videographer was involved in the shooting of the music video, whereas the task of editing fell upon Haoren. In the new music video, the actress appeared without brownface makeup and sang along in the chorus.

"I always thought that my job was purely to entertain the public, and that only parents and teachers are responsible for education. Through this experience, I realise that as a public figure, with so many people watching my videos, I have the responsibility to educate the public as well. From now on, I will remind myself that it is important to find the balance between entertaining and educating the public."⁸¹

4. PM cautions M'sians against politicians who use race for personal gain

15 February 2021

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has cautioned Malaysians against politicians who play on racial sentiment to gain political mileage, describing them as challenges faced in multiracial countries.

"We should be careful of the racial sentiment manipulation by politicians. This is a major challenge faced by almost all multi-ethnic countries. "The political actors who are trying to raise their political share via exploitation of racial feelings should be avoided by us," he said when launching the National Unity Policy and National Unity Blueprint 2021-2030 today.⁸²

5. After unity blueprint, PM launches Rukun Tetangga Leadership Empowerment Plan

28 February 2021

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin launched today the Rukun Tetangga (Neighbourhood Watch) Leadership Empowerment Plan that will complement the previously announced National Unity Blueprint 2021-2030.

At the launch ceremony, Muhyiddin said there was now a greater need to foster strong community ties and camaraderie through the establishment and participation of the Rukun Tetangga. "The role of Rukun Tetangga should always be supported as an agent and catalyst of efforts to unite the people.

"Therefore, I would like to invite the people to get to know each other, identify the needs of the community and address social issues in your locality to produce a prosperous community," he said during the launch.

The National Unity Blueprint 2021-2030 details the government's action plan to achieve goals set out in the National Unity Policy, which among others, aim to foster national integration based on the key pillars of the Federal Constitution and Rukun Negara. Rukun Tetangga was established by the fourth prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in 1975 as a

⁸¹ (Translation) China Press, "重修版《白娃娃》上线 朱浩仁认错反省'唱自己'" 6 February 2021. See: <https://www.chinapress.com.my/?p=2390313>

⁸² Malaysiakini, "PM cautions M'sians against politicians who use race for personal gain" 15 February 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/562987>

means to foster good relations among neighbours, a policy that was modelled after taking into consideration the 1969 racial riots in the country.⁸³

6. Police changes recruitment terms to encourage more non-Bumis to join the police force
11 March 2021

The police eased up recruitment terms for non-bumiputera candidates in an attempt to encourage more non-bumiputeras to join the police force.

Bukit Aman Management Department director Datuk Ramli Din said this special intake is tailored for non-Bumiputera Malaysians who will be given flexibility on their SPM's Bahasa Malaysia results (no need to obtain credit on their results). He said candidates who are accepted into the force but do not have a credit in Bahasa Malaysia will have to sit for the subject again within the first six years of their service and obtain a credit. If they fail to get a credit, we have no other option but to terminate their service.

"We are living in a multiracial country and this chance should be taken by every non-Bumiputera candidate for us to safeguard the safety and harmony of our country," said Ramli Din to a press conference in Bukit Aman this morning. He shared honestly about the obstacle Chinese applicants face, which is their SPM Bahasa Malaysia results.⁸⁴

7. Put nation's stability before politicking and race mongering, Sabah leader tells Perikatan govt
26 March 2021

Parti Warisan Sabah today criticised the PN government and MN over their internal feuds and excessive racial and religious politicking that he said could potentially destroy the country.

The former minister of international trade and industry, Datuk Darrell Leiking mentioned that inter-party squabbling was centred too much on racial and religious politics, which exacerbated the problem. "This is not the right time to talk about race and religion — we need to save and rejuvenate our economy because hundreds of thousands of ordinary Malaysians irrespective of whether he/she is a Malay, Chinese, Indian, Dayak, KadazanDusun or Bajau have already utilised their EPF as their last lifeline to survive.

"But PN seems to have misplaced priorities when the Prime Minister's Office now wants to table the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965 (Act 355) and Control and Restriction on the Propagation of Non-Muslim Bill," he said. Leiking, who is Penampang MP, said that globally the world is trying to move forward from racist policies through sports and education, with global corporations adopting non-discriminative policies. In contrast, Malaysia seemed to be regressing.⁸⁵

⁸³ Malay Mail, "After unity blueprint, PM launches Rukun Tetangga Leadership Empowerment Plan" 28 February 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/02/28/after-unity-blueprint-pm-launches-rukun-tetangga-leadership-empowerment-pla/1953533>

⁸⁴ (Translation) Oriental Daily, "放宽招募条件 鼓励更多非土著加入警队" 11 March 2021. See: <https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/nation/2021/03/11/397868>

⁸⁵ Malay Mail, "Put nation's stability before politicking and race mongering, Sabah leader tells Perikatan govt" 26 March 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/03/26/put-nations-stability-before-politicking-and-race-mongering-sabah-leader-te/1961384>

9. Jiao Zong reaches out to dispel 'racist' label

6 April 2021

Educationist group United Chinese School Teachers' Association (Jiao Zong) recently set up an inter-ethnic outreach committee to foster better interracial cooperation and to stop others from calling it a "racist" organisation. Jiao Zong president Cheah Lek Aee said the group needed to be more proactive in reaching out to the non-Chinese community to let them better understand its history and role in society.

He said that it was making plans to engage with Malay organisations and hold talks on how to cooperate on matters related to education. Cheah said he wanted to chart a new course for Jiao Zong by expunging the "racist" label associated with the group.

To achieve this, work related to the inter-ethnic outreach committee would be a priority. He argued that those who called Jiao Zong "racist" had misconstrued the group's mission to preserve Chinese education as being motivated by racism. "Some of our more open-minded (non-Chinese) friends do not think of us in such a way. They understand our mission is to preserve Chinese education," he said.⁸⁶

10. Anti-racism rap video makes rounds after Ganapathy's death

6 May 2021

A mix of smart hip-hop rhymes, and a sung upper register R&B inflected chorus, rap artist Saint TFC's trilingual song *I'll Not Forget (Aku Tak Akan Lupa / Marakka Maten)* switches back and forth between English, Malay and Tamil, with powerful lyrics of a man questioning why he has been oppressed because of the colour of his skin, before reminding us that we share the same blood and will return to the same earth after death. Saint TFC shared that the song was written out of many moments in his life when he had been racially profiled, and that he received many reactions from listener who also had the same experience.⁸⁷

11. #SayaBukanPendatang: A controversial tweet spew wrath amongst fellow Malaysians

23 July 2021

A Twitter user landed in hot water after her tweet on 'PENDATANG' (immigrants) went viral which triggered a heated debate among social media users. In her tweet, she referred to an Indian student who scored straight A's in the SPM examination but was unable to get a placement in the Unit Pusat Universiti or Bahagian Pengurusan Kemasukan Pelajar IPT.

Unfortunately, Malaysians criticised the girl's action on posting such an irrelevant term. Youth Member of Parliament Kiran Raj Sathivel and a university student who wished to remain anonymous shared their take on the word deemed controversial, with Varnam.

Kiran Raj was the first who came up with the #SayaBukanPendatang hashtag before 'The Loud Asians' started the petition of #PendidikanUntukSemua. It came as a surprise when

⁸⁶ The Star, "Jiao Zong reaches out to dispel 'racist' label" 6 April 2021. See: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/04/06/jiao-zong-reaches-out-to-dispel-racist-label>

⁸⁷ Malaysiakini, "Anti-racism rap video makes rounds after Ganapathy's death" 6 May 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/573558>

Malaysian netizens were so engaged and supported this teenager's perspective with open arms.⁸⁸

12. Learn from Sabah, Sarawak on racial, religious tolerance, says academic

15 September 2021

Sarjit S Gill, a professor with Universiti Putra Malaysia's faculty of human ecology, said in his research spanning 20 years, he found that the communities in Sabah had a high level of tolerance in celebrating their cultures and religions in their daily lives.

"The reality is the communities in both states place much importance on tolerance and celebrating their diversity so that they can live collectively and in a harmonious environment," he said during a webinar today.

"They have managed this diversity well and the question now is how the communities in the peninsula – the Malays, Chinese and Indians – can learn from Sabah and Sarawak."

Sarjit was one of the panellists in the webinar hosted by Universiti Malaysia Sabah, entitled "Harmonious Ethnic Relations in Sabah: Rhetoric or Reality?" The event was organised in conjunction with Malaysia Day.⁸⁹

13. Base affirmative action on needs, not race, govt urged

15 September 2021

While affirmative action should not be done away with completely, it should be prefaced on needs rather than race, say two prominent Malaysians.

Speaking at an online forum on the legacy of the New Economic Policy (NEP), former finance ministry secretary-general Mohd Sheriff Kassim and former CIMB group chairman Nazir Razak both agreed that Malays are now more capable of finding their own success than they were 50 years ago when the policy was introduced.

"The policy of preferential treatment (of Malays) should be reviewed so that they will be encouraged to compete on their own merit," said Sheriff.⁹⁰

14. No discrimination in Malaysian Armed Forces, says general

2 October 2021

There is no institutional racism in the Malaysian Armed Forces, says Reserve Force Division director-general Brig-Jen Padman Bhaskaran (pic).

He said that the perception of institutional racism is not only misleading but detrimental to efforts to recruit other races to join the military.

⁸⁸ Varnam, "#SayaBukanPendatang; A Controversial Tweet Spew Wrath Amongst Fellow Malaysians" 23 July 2021. See: <https://varnam.my/community/2021/45124/sayabukanpendatang-a-controversial-tweet-spew-wrath-amongst-fellow-malaysians/>

⁸⁹ Free Malaysia Today, "Learn from Sabah, Sarawak on racial, religious tolerance, says academic" 15 September 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/09/15/learn-from-sabah-sarawak-on-racial-religious-tolerance-says-academic/>

⁹⁰ Free Malaysia Today, "Base affirmative action on needs, not race, govt urged" 15 September 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/09/15/base-affirmative-action-on-needs-not-race-govt-urged/>

"There have never been quotas for any races for its selection and recruitment process, so there should not arise any notion that the Armed Forces is only for a particular race," he said.

"Selection is done in a fair and transparent manner without taking into consideration any differences in race or religion," he said when contacted.⁹¹

15. #Showbiz: Artistes, filmmakers endorse industry code of conduct

22 October 2021

Integrated Malaysian Actors Network (IMAN), with the support of the Malaysian Association of Advertising Filmmakers, has initiated a pledge to support a code which covers discrimination, bullying and harassment. In a statement today, IMAN said that the code was from one earlier published by the arts group Five Arts Centre for the performing arts community. A total of 50 individuals and 29 companies pledged their support for the code.

"We aim to ensure that all receive equal treatment irrespective of gender, marital status, race, religion, pregnancy and disability. "We are committed to ensuring the highest ethical standards while working and maintaining an environment free from victimisation," added the statement.⁹²

16. Better a clean multiracial govt than a corrupt Malay-Muslim one, says Idris

26 October 2021

Former Melaka CM Idris Haron said the state would be better off under a multiracial and clean administration rather than a Malay-Muslim state government that was corrupt and incompetent.

"On the other hand, a government of various backgrounds which possesses racial unity, that is more Islamic and capable of ensuring the welfare of the people of Melaka." Idris claimed that aid programmes of the previous state government had discriminated against people of different political backgrounds, citing as an example how aid from the Melaka Islamic Religious Council was distributed at a hall with party flags hung around.

"Islam doesn't distinguish between races. Islam doesn't distinguish between political backgrounds. If we really say that we are a Malay government that upholds Islam, then there should not be any political discrimination in giving aid to the people of Melaka."⁹³

17. In Deepavali message, Guan Eng urges Malaysians to unite against those pursuing racist and extremist agenda

4 November 2021

Malaysians must unite against those pushing racism and an extremist religious agenda, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said today. In his Deepavali message, Lim said Malaysia continues to be distracted by those in government who play up racial and religious

⁹¹ The Star, "No discrimination in Malaysian Armed Forces, says general" 2 October 2021. See:

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/10/02/no-discrimination-in-malaysian-armed-forces-says-general>

⁹² New Straits Times, "#Showbiz: Artistes, filmmakers endorse industry code of conduct" 22 October 2021. See:

<https://www.nst.com.my/lifestyle/groove/2021/10/738928/showbiz-artistes-filmmakers-endorse-industry-code-conduct>

⁹³ Free Malaysia Today, "Better a clean multiracial govt than a corrupt Malay-Muslim one, says Idris" 26 October 2021. See:

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/10/26/better-a-clean-multiracial-govt-than-a-corrupt-malay-muslim-one-says-idris/>

sentiments, as well as discriminate and interfere in the lifestyle of non-Muslims and non-Malays. "We must not despair but unite as one against those in government pursuing such a racist and extremist religious agenda. "Truth, justice and freedom must not be mere words but core principles that must be upheld to ensure prosperity for all. Let us dedicate ourselves to the fundamental premise of the Federal Constitution that Malaysia belongs to both Muslims and non-Muslims, Malays and non-Malays from peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak," he said.⁹⁴

18. Hannah dares PM to table Race Relations Act

10 November 2021

Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob has been challenged to table a Race Relations Act if he is really serious about his Malaysian Family concept. Hannah Yeoh (PH-Segambut) said she was not sure that Ismail was capable of uniting all the races in the country, pointing to the budget as an example. "Budget 2022 is based on race, and not in line with the prime minister's Malaysian Family approach," she said when debating the Supply Bill 2022. "The COVID-19 crisis has affected all races. It should be a recovery budget and an inclusive one."

She told the Dewan Rakyat that she read a Wikipedia page linking Ismail to six controversies, many linked to racial issues. Among them are calling for a boycott of Chinese businesses, mooting Low Yat 2 for Malay traders only, Mara's termination of sponsorship for Taylor's University etc.

For decades, many NGOs have clamoured for such an Act, to mirror a United Kingdom legislation based on the idea that the only way to achieve good race relations was by insisting that all individuals, employers and public sector bodies have a duty to promote good inter-race relations.⁹⁵

19. Review Article 153, revamp affirmative action to needs-based, govt told

10 November 2021

An opposition MP has called for a review of Article 153 of the Federal Constitution so that affirmative action policies can be revamped to be more needs-based.

Hassan Karim (PH-Pasir Gudang) made this appeal to the government while debating the Supply Bill 2022 in the Dewan Rakyat today. "What is the point of helping wealthy Malays who own stocks and are able to stash money in offshore accounts when poor Chinese, Indians, and indigenous people (Orang Asli) are struggling?" he asked.

Interjected by Che Abdullah Mat Nawi (PAS-Tumpat), who asked him to clarify his suggestion on reviewing Article 153, which touches on the special privileges of the Malays and Bumiputeras, and his idea of social justice, Hassan replied that a review of Article 153 was necessary because the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia, whom he called the "actual Bumiputeras", were not included. He also criticised the disparity between the allocations for

⁹⁴ Malay Mail, "In Deepavali message, Guan Eng urges Malaysians to unite against those pursuing racist and extremist agenda" 4 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/11/04/in-deepavali-message-guan-eng-urges-malaysians-to-unite-against-those-pursu/2018371>

⁹⁵ Free Malaysia Today, "Hannah dares PM to table Race Relations Act" 10 November 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/11/10/hannah-dares-pm-to-table-race-relations-act/>

the Malays/Bumiputeras and non-Malays in Budget 2022, with the former being allocated RM11.4 billion compared to RM300 million for the others.⁹⁶

20. Pejuang's pledge: Non-Malays will not be sidelined

15 November 2021

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had pledged that Pejuang will not sideline the non-Malays. He claimed that by any standard the Malaysian liberalism towards non-Malays is unprecedented. He stated that while Pejuang will strive to bring up the Malays to approximately the same economic level as the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese, it will adhere to all the liberal policies and privileges that Malaysia accords to the non-Malays. While the Malays can hope to catch up, the others will not lose their places and opportunities.⁹⁷

21. DAP suggests govt to recognise those born after independence day as 'Bumiputeras' in the name of "Keluarga Malaysia"

23 November 2021

During a Parliamentary seating, Teluk Intan MP Nga Kor Ming (DAP) suggested that the government formulate a new national unity policy which recognises all Malaysians born after on and after the country's Independence day on 31 August 1957 as Bumiputeras.

Nga said that Indonesia had long abolished the Bumiputera status, contrary to Malaysia. The Bumiputera status is deeply engraved in Malaysia's policies, and for the Malaysian government to promote a true 'Keluarga Malaysia', they should not make different policies for the Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras.

He then said that all citizens born after the country's independence in 1957 should be given fair treatment. "Race-based politics is the biggest stumbling block to national unity and it hinders national progress. He stressed that if the government continues to create race-based policies, it is almost certain that national unity will be an unattainable dream. "The ruling and opposition parties must seriously review the mistakes of the past. Our country can no longer return to the right track for development if we continue to make the same mistakes."⁹⁸

22. Give RM2bil more to Sabah, Sarawak, Bumis and non-Bumis, says Guan Eng

25 November 2021

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng has urged the government to increase its Budget 2022 allocations for Sabah and Sarawak to prove that 'Keluarga Malaysia' is not an empty slogan.

A RM2 billion increase in allocations for Sabah, Sarawak, Bumiputeras and non-Bumiputeras, he said, will help to unite Malaysia. Recently, PH expressed unhappiness over the budget

⁹⁶ Free Malaysia Today, "Review Article 153, revamp affirmative action to needs-based, govt told" 10 November 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/11/10/review-article-153-revamp-affirmative-action-to-needs-based-govt-told/>

⁹⁷ Malaysiakini, "MP SPEAKS | Pejuang's pledge: Non-Malays will not be sidelined" 15 October 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/599251>

⁹⁸ Malaysia Trend, "DAP Suggests Govt To Recognise Those Born After Independence Day As 'Bumiputeras' In The Name Of 'Keluarga Malaysia'" 23 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiatrend.com/dap-suggests-govt-to-recognise-those-born-after-independence-day-as-bumiputeras-in-the-name-of-keluarga-malaysia/>

allocations and called for more to be given to Sabah and Sarawak, saying the budget should be fair for all Malaysians regardless of race, religion, gender or region.⁹⁹

23. National unity plan a return to Rukun Negara spirit, says PM

28 November 2021

The National Unity Action Plan 2021-2030 is an effort to restore the original dream of unity expressed in the five principles of Rukun Negara, said Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob. He said the Rukun Negara is the basic document of the way of life for Malaysians which was declared on Aug 31, 1970, to build strong unity among the multi-racial community based on unity and harmony between races through the principles contained therein.¹⁰⁰

24. Make specific laws on national unity, not rely on legal provisions: Mujahid

29 November 2021

Datuk Seri Mujahid Yusof Rawa (Parit Buntar-PH) has urged Putrajaya to enact specific laws that tackle matters threatening national unity, and not rely on other legal provisions that were not made with the sole purpose of ensuring peace.

Earlier, deputy National Unity Minister Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal had said that to ensure harmony between races and overcome racial issues, the government will rely on provisions in the Communications and Multimedia Act, Penal Code, and Sedition Act.

"I think the deputy minister is not following recent events. It is time for us to enact a specific law for the purpose of national unity and tackling hate speech. "If national unity gets its own ministry, it's time for it to have its own law," Mujahid said in the Dewan Rakyat.¹⁰¹

25. Hannah Yeoh: Wearing headscarf in mosque is respectful; promotes a moderate Malaysia

5 December 2021

Segambut MP Hannah Yeoh sparked an online debate among netizens when news broke that she had entered a mosque donning a headscarf. Yeoh stressed that she did so as a gesture of respect and modesty, and that moderation should be a priority in Malaysia.¹⁰²

26. Reject racial politics, maintain Keluarga Malaysia identity - MCA

18 December 2021

All political parties, including the MCA, must reject any form of racism and extremism to maintain the multi-racial identity of Keluarga Malaysia. Its secretary-general Datuk Chong Sin Woon said that his party was disappointed with a handful of politicians who preyed on issues related to religion and racism in an extreme manner. "This is worrisome and it is time for MCA, in fact, any political party in this country, to rise and be united and say 'no' to racism and extremism.

⁹⁹ Free Malaysia Today, "Give RM2bil more to Sabah, Sarawak, Bumis and non-Bumis, says Guan Eng" 25 November 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/11/25/give-rm2bil-more-to-sabah-sarawak-bumis-and-non-bumis-says-guan-eng/>

¹⁰⁰ Malaysiakini, "National unity plan a return to Rukun Negara spirit, says PM" 28 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/600954>

¹⁰¹ The Vibes, "Make specific laws on national unity, not rely on legal provisions: Mujahid" 29 November 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/48415/make-specific-laws-on-national-unity-not-rely-on-legal-provisions-mujahid>

¹⁰² Hannah Yeoh, 5 December 2021. See: <https://www.facebook.com/hannahyeoh/posts/438567040969642>

It is a strong signal that enough is enough; politicians have long been using race, religion, even education, languages as a tactic and this is dangerous. "We want to restore the people's power to make a multiracial, multicultural nation, which respects the diversity of religions, cultures and languages so as to maintain the multi-racial identity of the Malaysian Family."¹⁰³

27. Volunteers rise beyond race, religion to help flood victims at gurdwara

23 December 2021

It was a busy scene at the Gurdwara Sahib in Petaling Jaya as volunteers of all races and religions came together to organise efforts to help victims struggling to get their lives together after last weekend's devastating flash floods caused by a tropical depression. The volunteers of various colours, ages and religions, helped cook up vegetarian meals to be delivered to flood victims.

Gurdev Randhawa, 48, said the effort at the temple was a true reflection of Keluarga Malaysia. "I'm happy that we're helping people regardless of race and religion," said 55-year-old volunteer Vee Singh.

Varsity students have also lent their support at the temple. "We don't see such community efforts during normal times. This helps to bring people closer together," said Mahmood.¹⁰⁴

28. The mosque that was 'home' to all Malaysians

23 December 2021

When the flood waters slowly seeped into the homes of the residents in Bandar Bukit Raja in Klang, the president of a group comprising 32 residents' associations in Bandar Bukit Raja, Zulkifli, made an urgent call to Md Nazri Mohamed Nor, the chairman of Masjid Bandar Bukit Raja's construction committee for assistance. The mosque, which was built on higher ground than the rest of the area, eventually played host to more than 1,000 residents, regardless of race, religion, colour or creed.

"I don't care whether they are Buddhists, Christians or Muslims. In Bandar Bukit Raja, Alhamdulillah, our ties are like family," said Zulkifli.¹⁰⁵

29. Malaysian flood victims vouch for foreigners who helped save their lives

23 December 2021

In a video that went viral on social media, a woman in a headscarf was seen talking earnestly to Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar about how flood victims in Hulu Langat, Selangor were saved by Indonesian workers. According to her, three Indonesian men who came in a boat to rescue the residents, which included children, trapped on the roof of a house. She says the Indonesian men worked until the wee hours of the morning to rescue the people trapped in her home.

¹⁰³ New Straits Times, "Reject racial politics, maintain Keluarga Malaysia identity - MCA" 18 November 2021. See: <https://www.nst.com.my/news/politics/2021/12/755614/reject-racial-politics-maintain-keluarga-malaysia-identity-mca>

¹⁰⁴ Malaysiakini, "Volunteers rise beyond race, religion to help flood victims at gurdwara" 23 December 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/604241>

¹⁰⁵ Free Malaysia Today, "The mosque that was 'home' to all Malaysians" 23 December 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/12/23/the-mosque-that-was-home-to-all-malaysians/>

Another video showed an aunt describing how flood victims stayed united to feed themselves while stranded in Taman Sri Muda, Shah Alam. She said a resident carried up a gas tank to a roof for a neighbour who wanted to prepare fried rice for stranded victims. After the fried rice was prepared, the niece then chimed in to say it was Indonesians who delivered the food to others trapped on their respective roofs.

"They were like GrabExpress delivery people, who were floating (in floodwaters) with tyres," the niece recounts. "They threw water bottles, they climbed up to our roofs to give us food to calm us down because (at that time) we didn't have any food left."¹⁰⁶

30. Mosque clean-up by Indian boys brings cheer amid devastation

23 December 2021

Malaysia continues to display its identity as a nation with a melting pot of cultures, where people of different races live harmoniously alongside each other. In light of the recent flash floods, this has become more apparent, following the release of several videos on social media during and after the recent flood disaster. "Indians helping out to clean up a mosque near Klang," user @pecal23 tweeted alongside the video. The video touched the hearts of many. This is one example of how the people have come together during the recent chaotic times.¹⁰⁷

31. Islamic university students join hands to clean Hindu temple

24 December 2021

A viral video featuring a group of youths of different races cleaning up a Hindu temple in Taman Klang Utama has touched the hearts of many Malaysians. The young heroes featured in the video were volunteers from Parti Bangsa Malaysia and university students at the International Islamic University Malaysia in Gombak.

"As a Malaysian, I believe we must be united no matter our race or religion, especially during this pandemic and floods. "We should also put aside race and religion and move forward as a nation at all times," he said. Many netizens took to the comment section to praise the group and thanked them for their efforts."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ SAYS, "M'sian Flood Victims Vouch For Foreigners Who Helped Save Their Lives" 23 December 2021. See: <https://says.com/my/news/foreign-workers-save-m-sian-flood-victims-viral-videos>

¹⁰⁷ The Vibes, "Mosque clean-up by Indian boys brings cheer amid devastation" 23 December 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/50368/indian-boys-seen-helping-with-mosque-clean-up>

¹⁰⁸ Free Malaysia Today, "Islamic university students join hands to clean Hindu temple" 24 December 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/12/24/islamic-university-students-join-hands-to-clean-hindu-temple/>

CALLING OUT / RESPONDING TO RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS INJUSTICES

This section outlines the responses by individuals, groups, political leaders and political parties to incidents of racial and religious injustices.

1. Minister, DCM slam Kedah for cancelling Thaipusam public holiday

21 January 2021

Human Resources Minister M Saravanan and Penang Deputy CM P Ramasamy have criticised Kedah's move to cancel the public holiday for Thaipusam that is slated for Jan 28. "Malaysian Hindus are clearly upset and disturbed with the announcement made by the Kedah Menteri Besar (Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor) as it is a festival celebrated by Hindus based on the Hindu calendar.

"Just because we cannot go to the temple does not mean we cannot celebrate it at home. Furthermore, Thaipusam is not about visiting friends and family but a day to devote our time for Lord Muruga through prayers and paying of penance. Although this year Hindus are not allowed to go to temples, we can do our prayers at home and do the necessary to fulfil our vows due to the spread of the pandemic," Saravanan said. "The pandemic merely ensues the cancellation of events associated with it, but not the significance of the religious festival itself."¹⁰⁹

2. Fahmi, Hannah push back against 'advocates for foreigners' comments

29 January 2021

Lembah Pantai MP Fahmi Fadzil criticised senior minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob who accused Fahmi for considering the cost borne by foreigners for COVID-19 tests more valuable than the lives of Malaysians.

Fahmi said that this was a distasteful accusation because he had not even mentioned any issue on foreigners in his previous statement. The issue on the cost of COVID-19 tests for B40 was unanswered, while he stated that the main issues he raised were the Joint Management Body issue and management corporation.

On the other hand, Segambut MP Hannah Yeoh asked on Twitter when would Ismail use science to govern the country, stating that when the minister was taken to task by the people, he accused her and Fahmi of being advocates for foreigners.¹¹⁰

3. 'The Chinese are not pendatang'

21 February 2021

The Sultan of Johor has paid tribute to the Chinese community in the state, describing them as a pillar of the state's economy and that they must be recognised for their resilience and hard work.

¹⁰⁹ Malaysiakini, "Minister, DCM slam Kedah for cancelling Thaipusam public holiday" 21 January 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/559803>

¹¹⁰ (Translation) Free Malaysia Today, "Fahmi, Hannah kritik tuduhan 'pejuang warga asing'" 29 January 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/bahasa/tempatan/2021/01/29/fahmi-hannah-kritik-tuduhan-pejuang-warga-asing/>

"They are not *pendatang*. They were invited to Johor to cultivate our plantations. My forefathers understood the needs of our Chinese guests and they helped to cultivate our plantations. Let no one in Johor describe the Chinese as *pendatang*. They helped to build our economy and they have become Malaysians. They are just as Malaysian as everyone else.

"They are Bangsa Johor, like the Malays and Indians and others," Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar said in an interview, in conjunction with Chinese New Year. Sultan Ibrahim said he wanted the young to understand the history of Johor and how the palace had played a major role in the state's administration and economy as well as invited the Chinese settlers to come to Johor.¹¹¹

4. JDT: No room for racism in Bangsa Johor football

4 March 2021

Selangor forward, Ifedayo Olusegun, was racially abused during a recent match.¹¹² Unfortunately, the news did not gain much traction. It was reported that unruly fans outside the KLFA Stadium chanted 'monkey' that was directed to Selangor's Ifedayo Omosuyi after Selangor's defeat to KLFA.

Since then, Johor Darul Ta'zim Football Club (JDT) as well as the fans, who have different origins have come together as one under the JDT family banner.

"The club started sending anti-racism messages before every match well before the Malaysian Football League (MFL) started doing it. That message needs to be driven home by all parties beyond that of football; there needs to be a concerted effort to end bigotry once and for all."¹¹³

5. Expert slams history textbooks for errors, pro-Malay bias

12 April 2021

A historian has criticised the latest edition of secondary school history textbooks for being biased and inaccurate and called on the education ministry to take action. Ranjit Singh Malhi said the textbooks, for use in Form 1 to Form 5, were Malay and Islam-centric and had omitted key facts relevant to nation-building while including factual distortions and exaggerations.

"The glaring defects in the current history textbooks only confirm the bias of the writers. They do not provide an adequate, balanced and fair account of the emergence and growth of Malaysia's plural society," he said in a statement. He added that there were several "inexcusable" errors in the textbooks despite having a panel of experts to vet the book.

He called for an end to ethnic and religious prejudice in textbooks, saying Malaysians needed to learn how to value the nation's rich multicultural heritage which makes up the soul of the country.

¹¹¹ The Star, "The Chinese are not *pendatang*" 21 February 2021. See:

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/02/21/the-chinese-are-not-pendatang>

¹¹² NST, "KL win caring cup marred monkey chants" 28 February 2021. See:

<https://www.nst.com.my/sports/football/2021/02/669621/kl-win-caring-cup-marred-monkey-chants>

¹¹³ The Vibes, "JDT: No room for racism in Bangsa Johor football" 4 March 2021. See:

<https://www.thevibes.com/articles/sports/19509/jdt-no-room-for-racism-in-bangsa-johor-football>

“The teaching of inclusive history is an integral part of nation-building. Our history textbooks should adopt a ‘pluralistic framework’ which promotes a sense of national identity and belonging which is crucial for racial harmony and national unity.

“I have no objections to the Malay/Islam narrative being the core of Malaysian history, but definitely not at the expense of marginalising the history of non-Malays, Orang Asli of West Malaysia and Orang Asal of Sabah and Sarawak,” he said.¹¹⁴

Wan Ramli Wan Daud of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) claimed that there is some truth to Ranjit’s statement regarding the failure of the textbook to present the contribution of the Hindhu-Buddha civilisation on the culture, language and Malay literature stating that “The Malay Hindu-Buddha civilisation spanned at least 1,200 years before the Malays embraced Islam. The Malay Islam civilisation is only 800 years.”

6. School’s sports-by-race move gets the red card

16 April 2021

A national school in Batu Pahat, Johor has been criticised over its move to segregate sporting activities according to the race of its students.

According to a note issued by SMK Dato’ Bentara Luar on the registration for co-curricular activities, the students’ choices for sports were limited by their race. Football and sepak takraw clubs were open for “Malay males only”, while the basketball club was for “Chinese males and females”. Hockey, meanwhile, was opened only to students living in dorms, while only Malay girls could join the netball club. Sports like handball, bowling, petanque and badminton, however, were open to all.

When contacted, the school’s principal Abdul Razak Hamid confirmed the note and claimed the “conditions” were necessary because of the lack of sporting facilities for the students.

Social media users have slammed the school, with some saying sports is a platform to unite the people, not divide them. Others described the move as racist.

Johor exco for education, information, culture and heritage Mazlan Bujang declined to comment and instead told the media to seek a comment from the education minister instead.¹¹⁵

7. Respect right to religious freedom, avoid prejudice, discrimination, says minister

17 April 2021

Datuk Seri Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri highlighted that the attitude of openness in living in a plural society must be continued by every member of society. He stated, “In Malaysia, Islam is enshrined as the religion of the Federation but freedom of religion has been practised for a long time. This right is enshrined in the Federal Constitution. Not just for Islam but also the rights of other religions as long as it does not disturb the peace, cause inconvenience or lead

¹¹⁴ Free Malaysia Today, “Expert slams history textbooks for errors, pro-Malay bias” 12 April 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/04/12/expert-slams-history-textbook-for-errors-pro-malay-bias/>

¹¹⁵ Free Malaysia Today, “School’s sports-by-race move gets the red card” 16 April 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/04/16/schools-sports-by-race-move-gets-the-red-card/>

to harm towards any party." He reminded the people to avoid prejudice, suspicion and anger in practising their religion.¹¹⁶

8. Awesome Canteen has the perfect response to racist customer who says to not hire Indians

23 April 2021

Awesome Canteen, a popular restaurant in Taman Paramount, Petaling Jaya shared a recent encounter it had with a customer who made certain racist remarks.

On its Instagram Stories yesterday, 22 April, the restaurant wrote, "This person called our barista and told her that we should not hire any more Indian staff for reasons we are not clear of. Regardless, there is no excuse to exhibit such racist and discriminatory behaviour in any setting.

"Awesome Canteen has a very clear stance on racism and we are against it. Racism has no place in our community and should anyone exhibit such behaviour; we will disallow you from dining in with us,"

"Take careful note, Awesome Canteen is a safe space. There is no tolerance and no room at all for racist, homophobic, sexist behaviour regardless of the reason." Standing up for its employees, the restaurant also added that its staff "are not your workers nor are they your servants. They are people and deserve to be respected".¹¹⁷

9. Don't make false allegations against all Christians, says ex-minister

23 April 2021

Any allegation made against the Christian community must be substantiated, former Islamic affairs minister Mujahid Yusof Rawa said, adding that it was against Islamic law to make generalisations. Commenting on a book claiming to expose a Christian agenda, published by the Selangor Islamic council, he said the entire Christian community could be deemed evil if the claims were not substantiated. Mujahid admitted there were Christian sects that "aggressively promoted" their faith, and the best way to deal with this was through dakwah, or preaching.

He said that as non-Muslims were barred from propagating their religion to Muslims, the Muslims could take legal action against anyone who engaged with them for that purpose.

"I believe there are Christians who want to live peacefully and have a peaceful coexistence." The book, titled "Pendedahan Agenda Kristian", is a free book published by the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (JAIS), which is also available for download from its website. It was published in 2014, but its PDF copy has been shared on WhatsApp. The 120-page book states that while it "does not want to make enemies of Christians," Muslims were "disturbed by Christian evangelists" who were trying to push for apostasy among Muslims.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Malay Mail, "Respect right to religious freedom, avoid prejudice, discrimination, says minister" 17 April 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/amp/news/malaysia/2021/04/17/respect-right-to-religious-freedom-avoid-prejudice-discrimination-says-mini/1967261>

¹¹⁷ SAYS, "Awesome Canteen Has The Perfect Response To Racist Customer Who Says To Not Hire Indians" 23 April 2021. See: <https://says.com/my/news/awesome-canteen-respond-to-racist-customer>

¹¹⁸ Free Malaysia Today, "Don't make false allegations against all Christians, says ex-minister" 23 April 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/04/23/dont-make-false-allegations-against-all-christians-says-ex-minister/>

10. Why spray migrants with disinfectant, say MPs

7 June 2021

Two opposition MPs have questioned immigration authorities over the use of a disinfectant spray on undocumented migrants, calling the practice “inhumane” and “degrading”.

Bandar Kuching MP Dr Kelvin Yii urged the authorities to explain their actions, captured in a video clip showing disinfectant being sprayed over the hands and heads of arrested people sitting on the floor in groups.

“If they want to disinfect anyone, whether it is a migrant or Malaysian citizen, we must treat them with some respect, not make them sit on the ground and spray disinfectant on them as if they are animals,” he said.

The video clip was about 156 undocumented migrants detained at an illegal settlement in Cyberjaya. Immigration director-general Khairul Dzaimee Daud was quoted saying that Dettol had been used for disinfection purposes, and that he and other immigration officers were also sprayed down.

However, Yii said the World Health Organisation (WHO) had advised against disinfecting individuals as being physically and psychologically harmful as Dettol may cause irritation to the eyes and skin, or even gastrointestinal issues if it was accidentally ingested.

Klang MP Charles Santiago said it was illogical and “strategically wrong” to go after undocumented migrants at a time when the country should be focusing on managing the pandemic.¹¹⁹

11. PBS man slams PAS rep over call to segregate shopping trolleys

10 June 2021

PBS vice-president Johnny Mositun criticised the remarks of PAS-nominated assemblyman Aliakbar Gulasan, who urged all supermarkets and stores to be sensitive to the needs and sentiments of the various religions in Sabah. Aliakbar’s statement resulted from an incident at a supermarket in Keningau which, according to Aliakbar, was selling pork without segregating the trolleys used by its customers.

In response to his GRS ally, Mositun, a former state deputy speaker, said he was concerned over what he described as “the beginning of signs of extremism creeping into the state”. In a statement, Mositun said that as a Sabahan, he condemned this sort of religious extremism, and nobody should take a holier-than-thou attitude. He said the 32 ethnic and sub-ethnic groups in Sabah had always been able to live and work together as one family, despite coming from different backgrounds.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Free Malaysia Today, “Why spray migrants with disinfectant, say MPs” 7 June 2021. See:

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/06/07/why-spray-migrants-with-disinfectant-say-mps/>

¹²⁰ Free Malaysia Today, “PBS man slams PAS rep over call to segregate shopping trolleys” 10 June 2021. See:

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/06/10/pbs-man-slams-pas-rep-over-call-to-segregate-shopping-trolleys/>

12. Amnesty International slams ‘hateful’ anti-Rohingya poster

11 June 2021

A rights group has slammed the immigration department over an anti-Rohingya poster it shared on its Twitter account, saying it could foster “hatred, violence and xenophobia”.

In a hard-hitting statement, Amnesty International Malaysia (AIM) said it was “despicable” to say that a community that had undergone ethnic cleansing and endured unimaginable brutality was not only unwelcomed but also threatened with brute force.

It also said it was “particularly grotesque” that such a stance came from leaders who could crow to the international community about their concern for Palestinians one week, then threaten violence against those who are traumatised and displaced.

“How does the Malaysian government justify that hypocrisy?” asked AIM.¹²¹

13. Pie on the face for bakery’s racist customer

18 June 2021

A customer who demanded to know the ethnicity of those working in an online-based bakery in Petaling Jaya has been shut out by the business for being racist. Thirty One Fine Bakes took to Instagram to slam the racist with screenshots of the WhatsApp conversation attached, maintaining that there should be no tolerance for such discrimination and hate in Malaysia.

It had first received a query from the person about the company owner’s race, to which the bakery responded that it was a multiracial business and questioned the reason behind their question. The individual then replied that they wanted to know if there were workers from a certain ethnicity as they did not like to purchase goods produced by that particular race.

The bakery hit back at the customer, telling the person off for being racist and maintaining that it would not tolerate such sentiments. “Racism and discrimination are deep-rooted diseases of this country, and we work to ensure there is no space for that in this company and to call it out when we see it,” their message said.

“This company is a space for individuals to grow personally and professionally, without any prejudice. Because of your disgusting remarks, we are not sorry to say that we would be happy to lose you as a customer. All the best,” it said in its reply.¹²²

¹²¹ Free Malaysia Today, “Amnesty International slams ‘hateful’ anti-Rohingya poster” 11 June 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/06/11/amnesty-international-slams-hateful-anti-rohingya-poster/>

¹²² Free Malaysia Today, “Pie on the face for bakery’s racist customer” 18 June 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/06/18/pie-on-the-face-for-bakerys-racist-customer/>

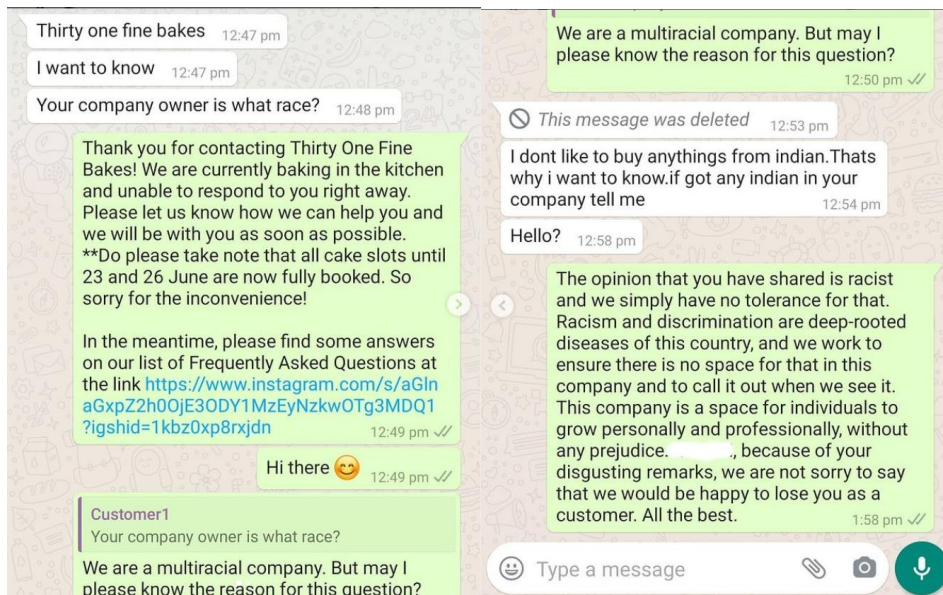


Image taken from Thirty One Fine Bakes Instagram page¹²³

14. Look beyond racism in Merdeka video to examine its message, says sociologist 26 August 2021

Amid the controversy surrounding a Merdeka-themed video with racist remarks, a sociologist says Malaysians seem to have ignored the film's overarching message – that children are not born racist. In the video titled "Mak, Dah Siap!" which went viral on Tuesday, a Malay father is shown describing Indians and Chinese in derogatory terms and stereotyping them as "gangsters" and "drunk drivers". He is quickly reprimanded by his wife, but the son soon repeats the same racial slurs and stereotypes mentioned by his father in a drawing he did for homework. The video then has the boy saying: "I was not born racist, but I was taught."

Sociologist Denison Jayasooria said the video reflects a "reality" that many Malaysians may yet be comfortable addressing. "More often than not, videos tend to give positive images and not negative stereotypes, but this (video) is also needed to shock people about the reality on the ground," said Jayasooria, a research fellow at UKM. "It shocks you, and you see the direct impact of the father's perceptions on the next generation (son).

Ryan Chua, programme director of human rights group Pusat KOMAS, said IKRAM should be lauded for raising the sensitive issue of how racism and stereotypes are spread among the public. "It could have been delivered better if there were more explanations on why the perpetuating of such stereotypes is not right. "Though in the video it shows that the child learns those stereotypes from the father, little was done to correct the father's actions. Children are not born racists, and we believe that this is the main message of the video, and this is what the viewers should take away from this film."¹²⁴

¹²³ Thirty One Fine Bakes, 18 June 2021. See: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CQQHlrBptYb/>

¹²⁴ Free Malaysia Today, "Look beyond racism in Merdeka video to examine its message, says sociologist" 26 August 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/08/26/look-beyond-racism-in-merdeka-video-to-examine-its-message-says-sociologist/>

15. OA artist Shaq upset over derogatory use of 'Jakun' by news portal

30 August 2021

Orang Asli artist Shaq Koyok is upset and angry over the usage of the word Jakun in a headline by a widely read Malay language news portal.

Shaq said he was horrified to see the headline “Jijoe jakun posing depan jambatan” by Harian Metro on a piece about cyclist Azizulhasni Awang who was proudly posing in front of the Terengganu drawbridge in his home state. In his original Facebook posting, the double Olympic medallist had said he does not care if people call him jakong (Terengganu dialect for Jakun) for posing in front of the bridge in Terengganu.¹²⁵

16. Citing respect, Sabah says opposing proposed Shariah Bill to control non-Muslim religions

9 September 2021

Sabah is against any proposal that will restrict the freedom of religion of its people, said CM Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor here today. He said that the state government holds firmly to the principle of religious freedom as declared in the Federal Constitution and the Malaysian Agreement 1963. “Sabah is saying no to the proposed bills on Control and Restrictions on the Expansion of non-Islam Religions as one of the four new Shariah bills,” he said in a statement here.

“Sabah is a state with people of many cultures and religions who have lived in peace and harmony all this while. Even with so many differing beliefs, we respect each other’s culture without problem,” he said, adding that Sabah’s unity in diversity was one of its pillars. Hajiji’s comments followed other Sabah-based parties like PBS, Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku (STAR) and United Progressive Kinabalu (UPKO) who have all rejected the concept of such a Bill that they said is unconstitutional.¹²⁶

17. Take action against anyone who plays up racial issues

21 September 2021

Tampin MP, Datuk Dr Hasan Bahrom reminded the government to take action against anyone who plays up racial issues whether for political or personal agenda. He called for the stop of racial and religious rhetorics among politicians such as 'For the Malays', 'For Islam', 'under threat', which can cause unrest.

He said that it is time for Malaysia to become one united nation and called for a Bill on Racial and Religious Harmony to be debated in Parliament.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Malaysiakini, "OA artist Shaq upset over derogatory use of 'Jakun' by news portal" 30 August. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/589246>

¹²⁶ Malay Mail, "Citing respect, Sabah says opposing proposed Shariah Bill to control non-Muslim religions" 9 September 2021. See: <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2021/09/09/citing-respect-sabah-says-opposing-proposed-shariah-bill-to-control-non-mus/2004278>

¹²⁷ (Translation) Astro Awani, "Take action against anyone who plays up racial issues" 21 September 2021. See: <https://www.astroawani.com/video-malaysia/ambil-tindakan-terhadap-manamana-pihak-mainkan-isu-perkauman-1924127>

18. 'Unfair to enforce 51pct bumi equity on freight forwarders retrospectively'

23 September 2021

It would not be fair for freight forwarding firms that have already been running for years to now sell off part of their company in order to comply with a proposed 51 percent bumiputera equity rule, said former finance minister Lim Guan Eng.

He was responding to FMFF's urge for Putrajaya to clarify the policy, which the government has yet to detail, even though the deadline is at the end of this year.

Lim (above) said the proposal had come up to him when he was the finance minister, but he had rejected it. "That is unconstitutional and unfair to the companies."¹²⁸

19. Fight racism at home, too, govt urged

23 September 2021

Malaysia has been active in global calls to eliminate racism, but it continues to struggle with issues of racism and racial discrimination in the local context, according to a sociologist.

"The Malaysian government made many international commitments to eliminate racism, such as signing various resolutions against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

"Those international commitments should also be applied at the local level," Denison Jayasooria said.

Jayasooria was speaking at a webinar titled, "20 Years Post Durban Declaration: Is Malaysia spearheaded in the right direction?" organised by human rights group Pusat KOMAS and the Society for the Promotion of Human Rights (PROHAM) today.¹²⁹

20. S'gor exco member: 51% Bumiputera rule for freight forwarders makes no sense

24 September 2021

Selangor exco member Ganabatirau Veraman has questioned the Finance Ministry's (MOF) move to ask for the equity of 51% of companies to be given to Bumiputeras.

"Is it necessary for the MOF to set such conditions? This will force local companies to sell their equities to Bumiputeras and no longer own majority shares despite the fact that these companies are built on the proceeds of their hard work," said the Kota Kemuning assemblyman in a Facebook post.

Under the existing rules, freight forwarders with custom licences registered before 1976 are exempted from any Bumiputera equity requirement.

For those registered between 1976 and 1990, it must have a 30% Bumiputera equity and those registered after 1990 must have 51% Bumiputera equity. Those with International Integrated Logistics Services (IILS) customs licences, however, do not have any Bumiputera

¹²⁸ Malaysiakini, "'Unfair to enforce 51pct bumi equity on freight forwarders retrospectively'" 23 September 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/592509>

¹²⁹ Free Malaysia Today, "Fight racism at home, too, govt urged" 23 September 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/09/23/fight-racism-at-home-too-govt-urged/>

requirement. However, MOF this year said the Bumiputera equity requirement will now be applied to all licence holders, including those in ILS.

Ganabatirau further expressed his hopes that the Government will re-examine the decision and not discriminate between local and foreign companies. "Do not damage the business of local companies, especially non-Bumiputera owned companies. The Government needs to encourage healthy competition to ensure a conducive and fair business environment."¹³⁰

21. Malaysian PM Ismail's push on bumiputera equity faces criticism in country

29 September 2021

A new policy announced by Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob on bumiputera equity has come under fire, with critics charging that it would do little to foster social mobility. This was in response to Datuk Seri Ismail's statement that bumiputera shares can be disposed of only to other bumiputera stakeholders, justifying the move as an effort to protect bumiputera equity in the country.¹³¹

22. Question over Bumi equity exemption for foreign freight forwarders

30 September 2021

An economist has questioned the lack of Bumiputera equity requirements for foreign freight forwarding companies classified as ILS providers.

While the finance ministry has put on hold plans to enforce a controversial 51% Bumiputera equity rule for freight forwarders with customs brokerage license until December next year, there are no such equity requirements for foreign ILS providers.

ILS is a status the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) grants to logistic companies that provide integrated door-to-door logistics services as a single entity on a regional or global scale.

"The logic in this is wrong. The rule should apply to everybody and should not be discriminatory," said Ramon Navaratnam.¹³²

23. Response towards racist comment against national shuttler

3 October 2021

Responding to the racist remark made by Bersatu divisional leader, Borhanuddin Che Rahim, against national women's singles shuttler S. Kisona on social media, several quarters have come forward to condemn those actions. BAM was "utterly appalled" by the racist comment made and stated that as the governing body of the sport in the country, they have zero tolerance of any form of racism or discrimination and, thus, condemned the remarks, adding that they will always stand up for the national players.¹³³

¹³⁰ Focus Malaysia, "S'gor exco member: 51% Bumiputera rule for freight forwarders makes no sense" 24 September 2021. See: <https://focusmalaysia.my/sgor-exco-member-51-bumiputera-rule-for-freight-forwarders-makes-no-sense/>

¹³¹ Straits Times, "Malaysian PM Ismail's push on bumiputera equity faces criticism in country" 29 September 2021. See: <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/ismails-push-on-bumiputera-equity-faces-criticism-in-malaysia>

¹³² Free Malaysia Today, "Question over Bumi equity exemption for foreign freight forwarders" 30 September 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/09/30/question-over-bumi-equity-exemption-for-foreign-freight-forwarders/>

¹³³ New Straits Times, "BAM: Racist comment against shuttler appalling" 3 October 2021. See: <https://www.nst.com.my/sports/badminton/2021/10/733290/bam-racist-comment-against-shuttler-appalling>

Additionally, the Bersatu divisional leader who uttered the statement has resigned from his position and offered an apology.¹³⁴ Numerous groups have come forward to condemn the remark too, including Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong, the Transport Minister¹³⁵, Datuk Halimah Sadique, National Unity Minister¹³⁶ and Deputy Youth and Sports Minister, Datuk Seri Ti Lian Ker¹³⁷.

Malaysians in general also condemned the racial slur over Kisona.¹³⁸ Some even called on the government to start efforts on the creation of a National Anti-Racial Discrimination Bill to resolve racial problems in the country.¹³⁹ Several police reports were also lodged against the Bersatu divisional leader and he will be investigated over the racial slur made.¹⁴⁰

24. Interfaith group urges action against preacher who derided other religions

5 October 2021

Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST) has called on Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob's government to act against a religious preacher for allegedly deriding people of other faiths.

The council said videos of his sermon circulated on social media were extreme, racist and filled with hatred.¹⁴¹

25. Revise Budget 2022 to make it fair to all races, says Wong Chen

2 November 2021

The government should revise Budget 2022 so that it is fairer to all races, Subang MP Wong Chen said.

"The way the budget was presented looks like it is racially lopsided," the Subang lawmaker said during the Budget debate in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Wong said although the COVID-19 epidemic does not discriminate, the division of resources appears otherwise. "How is it that this Keluarga Malaysia budget has allocated billions to Malays and Bumiputera but just millions to the Chinese and Indians?"

¹³⁴ Free Malaysia Today, "Bersatu man quits after racial slur against Kisona" 3 October 2021. See:

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/10/03/bersatu-man-quits-after-racial-slur-against-kisona/>

¹³⁵ The Star, "No room for racial slurs in M'sia, says Dr Wee in condemning remark against Kisona" 3 October 2021. See: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/10/03/no-room-for-racial-slurs-in-m039sia-says-dr-wee-in-condemning-remark-against-kisona>

¹³⁶ The Star, "Racial slurs against national badminton player S. Kisona are unacceptable, says Halimah" 5 October 2021. See: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/10/05/racial-slurs-against-national-badminton-player-s-kisona-are-unacceptable-says-halimah>

¹³⁷ The Star, "Kisona incident a lesson to all, says deputy minister" 6 October 2021. See: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2021/10/07/kisona-incident-a-lesson-to-all-says-deputy-minister>

¹³⁸ The Vibes, "Malaysians vent anger at politician over racial slur at Kisona" 3 October 2021. See:

<https://www.thevibes.com/articles/sports/43391/malaysians-vent-anger-atpolitician-over-racial-slur>

¹³⁹ (Translation) Suara Keadilan, "Malaysia needs Anti-Discrimination Bill to solve racial problems" 6 October 2021. See: <https://www.suarakeadilan.my/post/malaysia-perlukan-ruu-anti-diskriminasi-atasi-masalah-perkauman>

¹⁴⁰ Free Malaysia Today, "Cops to haul up ex-Bersatu man over racial slur against Kisona" 4 October 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/10/04/cops-to-haul-up-ex-bersatu-man-over-racial-slur-against-kisona/>

¹⁴¹ Malaysiakini, "Interfaith group urges action against preacher who derided other religions" 5 October 2021: See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/594063>

"Many netizens are questioning the gulf in allocations between the different races," he said.

"The government has to be more responsible when allocating funds. It is not logical to give more help to rich tycoons such as Syed Mokhtar Albukhary while there are not enough funds for the Chinese woman dishwasher or the Indian dispatch rider," said the PKR leader.

The RM332 billion Budget 2022 allocated RM290 million to improve infrastructure in Chinese new villages and RM145 million to the Indian community for socio-cultural economic programmes under the Malaysian Indian Transformation Unit.¹⁴²

26. Report immediately on racial issues - MFL

2 November 2021

MFL told its team Liga Malaysia to make a report immediately if there were any parties trying to play up racial issues so that proper action can be taken. MFL President, Datuk Ab Ghani Hassan said that he will not compromise when it comes to racist or discriminatory acts as shared by Sabah FC last Sunday. Sabah FC made a statement on Facebook that it took racist messages and comments seriously after an incident involving a social media user and striker N Thanabalan.¹⁴³

27. District in Perak bans retail of alcohol, Nga Kor Ming hounds Perak exco for violating Chinese and Indians' rights

3 November 2021

Nga Kor Ming criticised Perak State Executive Councillor, Akmal Kamaruddin, for not fulfilling his duty to the state to manage the pandemic situation but is instead pushing for an alcohol retail ban in Selama district, violating the freedom and rights of the Chinese and Indians. Regarding the announcement of the retail ban, Nga called this another example of PAS' extreme and narrow mindset, urging the public to see PAS' hypocrisy. With PAS going increasingly overboard with their religious policies and implementation, Nga said it was disappointing to see MCA, one of the component parties within the ruling coalition, keeping silent on this matter.¹⁴⁴

28. Alleged 'no bin' policy a loss for Melaka - Adly

18 November 2021

An alleged 'no bin' policy by the previous UMNO-Bersatu Melaka government, where individuals whose names do not contain "bin" will not receive approval for whatever they apply for is a loss to the state, former CM Adly Zahari said.

Claims of a "no bin" policy first emerged in a leaked recording, purportedly between incumbent Sungai Udang assemblyperson Idris Haron and Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob, where Idris sought to justify his decision to move against the UMNO-Bersatu government.

¹⁴² The Malaysian Insight, "Revise Budget 2022 to make it fair to all races, says Wong Chen" 2 November 2021. See: <https://www.themalaysianinsight.com/s/348907>

¹⁴³ (Translation) Astro Awani, "Buat laporan segera jika ada isu perkauman - MFL" 2 November 2021. See: <https://www.astroawani.com/berita-malaysia/buat-laporan-segera-jika-ada-isu-perkauman-mfl-328665>

¹⁴⁴ (Translation) Oriental Daily, "霹司南马禁公开售酒 倪可敏轰阿克玛不务正业剥夺华印裔权利" 3 November 2021. See: <https://www.orientaldaily.com.my/news/nation/2021/11/03/447789>

"You know what is the most unpopular policy in Melaka? As prime minister, you will be very regretful when you hear it - no 'bin' policy. That means any application by Chinese or Indian, will be rejected outright," the recording states. Adly, who is Harapan's chief ministerial candidate in the Melaka polls, said that impeding the progress of any community would also adversely impact the state's progress.¹⁴⁵

29. Wee: Spoon or chopsticks, embrace diversity and maintain harmony

19 December 2021

MCA has called on Malaysians of all races to continue maintaining peace, harmony and prosperity enjoyed today as a result of the struggles of the country's previous leaders.

Party president Wee Ka Siong said the country belongs to all Malaysians and what makes it unique is the multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-cultural society living in harmony based on mutual respect. "Regardless of our differences, including in the way we eat, either with our hands, chopsticks or spoon, it shows the uniqueness of Malaysian society which is full of diversity."¹⁴⁶

30. Ex-minister lauds PJ gurdwara for donating vegetarian dishes to flood victims

22 December 2021

Former religious affairs minister Datuk Seri Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri has praised the Gurdwara Sahib Petaling Jaya kitchen for providing vegetarian food to flood victims in the Klang Valley, allaying concerns raised on the dishes' halal status.

"The hukum (decree) for Muslims, in eating food prepared by non-Muslims who are not people of the book (from Abrahamic religions), is permissible as it does not involve animals they (non-Muslims) slaughtered." He said during the visit, he found that the food preparation in the multiracial kitchen was "very clean and tidy".

"I am very impressed to see the management of aid distribution, which involves participation of those from various religions and races. Since last Sunday, the Gurdwara Sahib kitchen has served more than 40,000 packs of food prepared by dozens of volunteers from different racial and religious backgrounds. The food prepared is then delivered to flood victims around the Klang Valley."¹⁴⁷

31. No regrets, says woman who stood against bigotry in halal row

28 December 2021

Noor Shamera Hassan knew she would hit turbulent waters when she decided to speak up publicly against Muslims who questioned if food donated by non-Muslims for flood victims was halal. But that did not deter her.

She produced a 90-second video clip berating the naysayers whom she described as using a double standard at a time when people were just interested in survival after the devastating

¹⁴⁵ Malaysiakini, "Alleged 'no bin' policy a loss for Malacca - Adly" 18 November 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/599676>

¹⁴⁶ Malaysiakini, "Wee: Spoon or chopsticks, embrace diversity and maintain harmony" 19 December 2021. See: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/603726>

¹⁴⁷ The Vibes, "Ex-minister lauds PJ gurdwara for donating vegetarian dishes to flood victims" 22 December 2021. See: <https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/50324/ex-minister-lauds-pj-kitchen-for-donating-vegetarian-dishes-to-flood-victims>

floods last week. "Of course, there were some Muslims who chastised me, questioning my authority over haram and halal, saying I had no locus standi.

"I was not discouraged because I always speak up against injustice. Islam allows Muslims to eat any food available in times of such emergency and if meant for survival. You see unmarried Muslim couples holding hands, is that halal? You see that everywhere but don't question such un-Islamic practices. Why?

"Please do not hurt the feelings of others especially when they were so magnanimous to sacrifice their time, effort and money," she is heard saying in the video. ¹⁴⁸

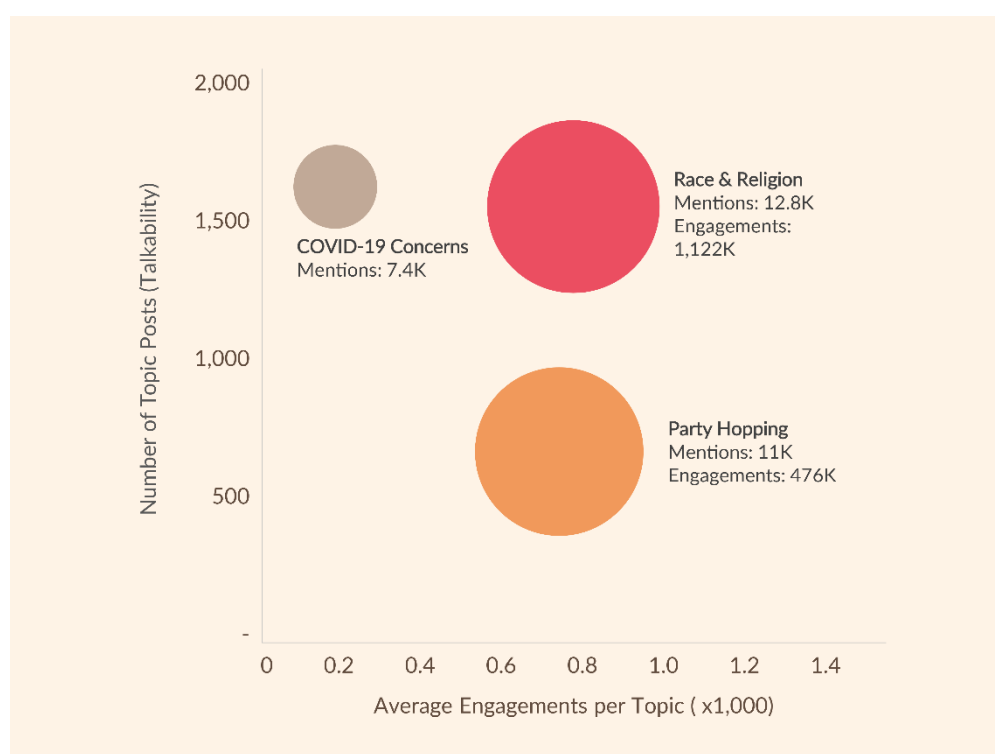
¹⁴⁸ Free Malaysia Today, "No regrets, says woman who stood against bigotry in halal row" 28 December 2021. See: <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/12/28/no-regrets-says-woman-who-stood-against-bigotry-in-halal-row/>

Special Report: Social Media Monitoring Project on Racial and Religious Politics during the Melaka State Elections 2021

The Melaka snap election was held in November 2021 due to the ongoing political crisis. As physical gatherings were restricted to curb the spread of COVID-19, political campaigns were conducted online. Pusat KOMAS collaborated with Zanroo Malaysia to monitor social media conversations during the Melaka state elections which took place from 1 to 22 November 2021. Public conversations, statements and actions of politicians and political parties were monitored and documented to see whether there were any signs of racial and religious politics played out on social media.

General Findings of the Social-Media Monitoring Project

Several conversational topics were identified on social media during the Melaka state elections. Topics related to (1) Party Hopping, (2) COVID-19 and (3) Race and Religion were found to be the key topics that surfaced during the elections, demonstrating high impact scores (high talkability¹⁴⁹ and average engagement per topic¹⁵⁰). In this sense, posts with high impact scores would mean that conversations on this topic were initiated in social media and reacted (by liking, sharing, commenting, etc.) when it was seen.



¹⁴⁹ Talkability: Number of original posts about a specific topic (How likely did a member of the public initiate a conversation about a topic)

¹⁵⁰ Average Engagement Per Topic: The number of engagements in a particular topic over the number of original postings in that topic (How likely did members of the public interact with the topic)

1. Party Hopping

Party Hopping was found to be one of the key topics that were highlighted during the state elections as the state election was triggered by elected representatives who decided to switch their political allegiance. Malaysians were found to express their views and opinions in social media about this topic. Party Hopping ranked the lowest in terms of talkability among the three conversation topics, but high in average engagements per topic.

2. COVID-19

Malaysians were found to express their concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic during the Melaka state elections as the previously held Sabah state elections had compromised COVID-19 containment efforts, which has caused the infection numbers to spiral out of control. The public had expressed fear that a similar situation would happen because of the Melaka state elections. This topic ranked the highest in terms of talkability but ranked the lowest on average engagement per topic.

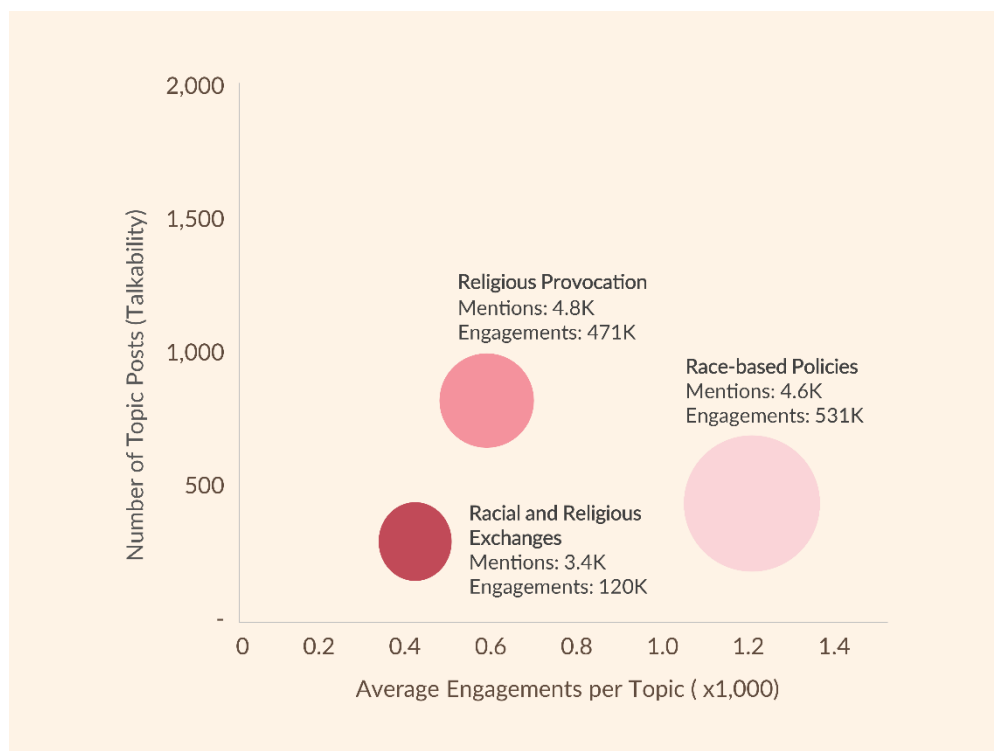
3. Race and Religion

Topics related to race and religion were also found to be trending in social media during the Melaka state elections. Though not the highest in talkability and average engagement per topic, this topic scored relatively high in both talkability and average engagement per topic, demonstrating a high impact factor.

Although topics such as Party Hopping, COVID-19 and Race and Religion were found to populate the conversation in social media during the Melaka state elections, it is worrying that Race and Religion yielded a high impact factor, suggesting that the conversation on topics related to **Race and Religion garnered high responses and generated much conversation** among the general public when compared to other topics such as Party Hopping and COVID-19.

Race and Religion on Social Media

Specifically, we examined conversational topics related to race and religion and identified the following topics (1) Religious Provocation, (2) Race-based Policies and (3) Racial and Religious Exchanges to be the key conversational topics under this category. Similarly, the impact scores of these topics were also examined and demonstrated in the figure below.



List of keywords used for monitoring (not exhaustive):

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. UMNO | 21. Sekolah vernakular |
| 2. Bersatu | 22. Bumi / Bumiputera |
| 3. DAP | 23. Hak istimewa |
| 4. PAS | 24. Tanah (Tanah Melayu / Tanah Asli / Tanah Asal) |
| 5. PKR | 25. Arak |
| 6. Gerakan | 26. Katak |
| 7. Pakatan Harapan / PH | 27. Judi |
| 8. Barisan Nasional / BN | 28. Perpaduan |
| 9. Amanah | 29. Keharmonian / Harmoni |
| 10. MIC | 30. Kepelbagaian |
| 11. MCA | 31. Hudud |
| 12. IMAN | 32. RUU355 |
| 13. Perikatan Nasional / PN | 33. Tongsan |
| 14. Cina | 34. Keling |
| 15. Melayu | 35. Ummah |
| 16. India | 36. Muafakat Nasional |
| 17. Pendatang | 37. Bangsa / Kaum |
| 18. Article 153 / Artikel 153 | 38. Hawau |
| 19. Agama | |
| 20. Islam | |

1. Religious Provocation

Political campaigns based on religion such as #IslamMenyatukanUmmah to promote Muslim unification and the sensationalisation of issues into religious issues such as calling for the ban of the whiskey brand name 'Timah', the closure of 4D (lottery) shops in Kedah and the liquor ban in several

states had yielded high talkability and moderate average engagement per topic during the Melaka state elections.

2. Race-based Policies

Conversations concerning policies that safeguards or protects the interest of one's ethnic group were also another topic which yielded a high impact factor. Specifically, this topic ranked moderately in talkability but the highest in average engagement per topic. Topics related to bumiputera-oriented policies (e.g., quota system) and education policies related to the national language (e.g., Unified Examination Certificate, vernacular schools) were racialised and used during the Melaka state elections.

3. Racial and Religious Exchanges

The general public were also found to engage in racial and religious conversations in social media during the state elections. Some messages were anti-racist where members of the public called out racist or racially discriminatory behaviour of politicians and political parties. Others were explicitly racist, containing racist slurs and speaking in a hostile manner about other races. A small number of messages were related to fear mongering, where members of the public were not explicitly attacking or insulting a particular race, but suggesting that a particular race was a threat to their own and calling for their own race to beware of said threat. This topic ranked the lowest in terms of talkability and average engagement per topic.

Our findings suggest that most conversations related to race and religion originated from politicians and/or their political party. During the campaigning period, the calls for the banning of the whiskey brand "Timah" and the closure of 4D shops in Kedah were initiated by the politicians themselves. The timing when these topics were raised was concerning as they were only raised during the electoral period, which suggests that these issues were initiated to stir voters' emotions and to influence their voting decision. This was reflected in the conversations that were found on social media where people from different religious groups began debating with one another over the matter. From this, it can be inferred that social media conversations on race and religion are **driven by politicians' actions** and by **news media outlets** which report incidents in a politicised and sensationalised manner. When these matters are politicised and sensationalised, heated arguments and debates on social media can easily break out, severing the already weakened social fabric that binds all Malaysians together.

Political Party Communication Strategies

We also examined the communication strategies of the main political coalitions and their component parties during the Melaka state elections. Key postings from the party's official channels and their key spokespersons (e.g., party leaders) were monitored and selected for the analysis. Four broad categories were identified in the political party communication strategies:

1. Messages related to Politics

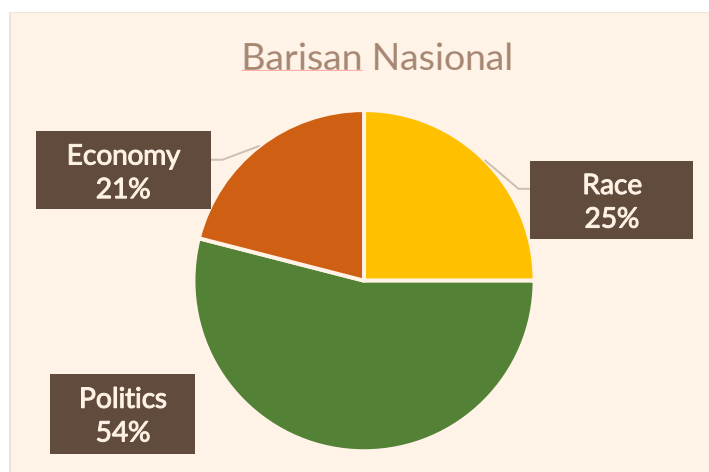
Posts or comments that mention political issues and attacks between parties (e.g., BN Leaders are all kleptocrats, PH is hungry for power, the collaboration between PAS and Bersatu) are categorised under this category.

2. Messages related to Economy

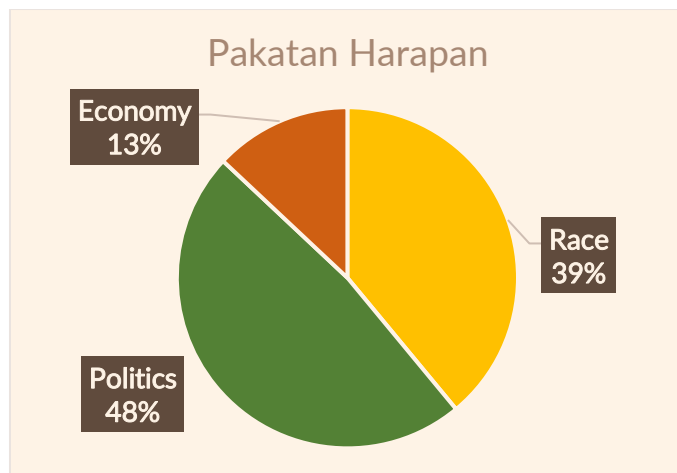
Posts or comments that include a mention of economic-related matters (e.g., Budget 2022, Tax Reduction, return on investment for certain projects/initiative) are categorised under Economy.

3. Messages related to Race & Religion

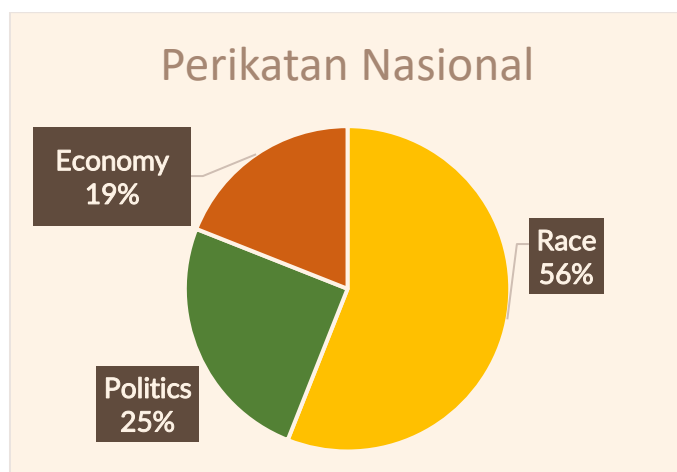
Posts or comments that mentioned any ethnic group (e.g., Melayu, Chinese, etc.) and religion (e.g., Islam, Hindu, etc.) are categorised under Race & Religion. Any post or comment which contained mentions of ethnicity and religion are included in this category, regardless of whether the post or comment made a general reference to ethnicity or religion, was racially or religiously provocative or opposed racism.



The largest portion of messages from BN fell under the Politics theme (54%). From the political standpoint, several of BN's postings were targeted at other parties such as PH's attitude towards party hoppers, as well as BERSATU, in its reaction to UMNO refusing to work with them. Other messages revolved around their manifesto and their local campaign progress. Twenty-one percent (21%) of messages from BN were concerned with the Economy such as GDP growth and the Melaka gateway project. In fact, one of the key spokespersons of BN highlighted issues such as GDP growth and Melaka Gateway project as prove of incompetence of PH. Race and Religion accounted for twenty-five percent (25%) of BN's communication strategy, where most of the messages were used to attack PH for being hypocritical in promoting a Malaysia for all Malaysians. For instance, BN's spokesperson claimed that PH was the one who was trying to politicise the "Timah" issue to create controversy against the government, despite them being the mastermind behind the issue (claiming that Timah was given approval during PH administration). Some messages were also linked to PAS and MN. They claimed that this is in line with UMNO's policy as they have not neglected the rights and benefits of other races and religions and to treat everyone with respect.

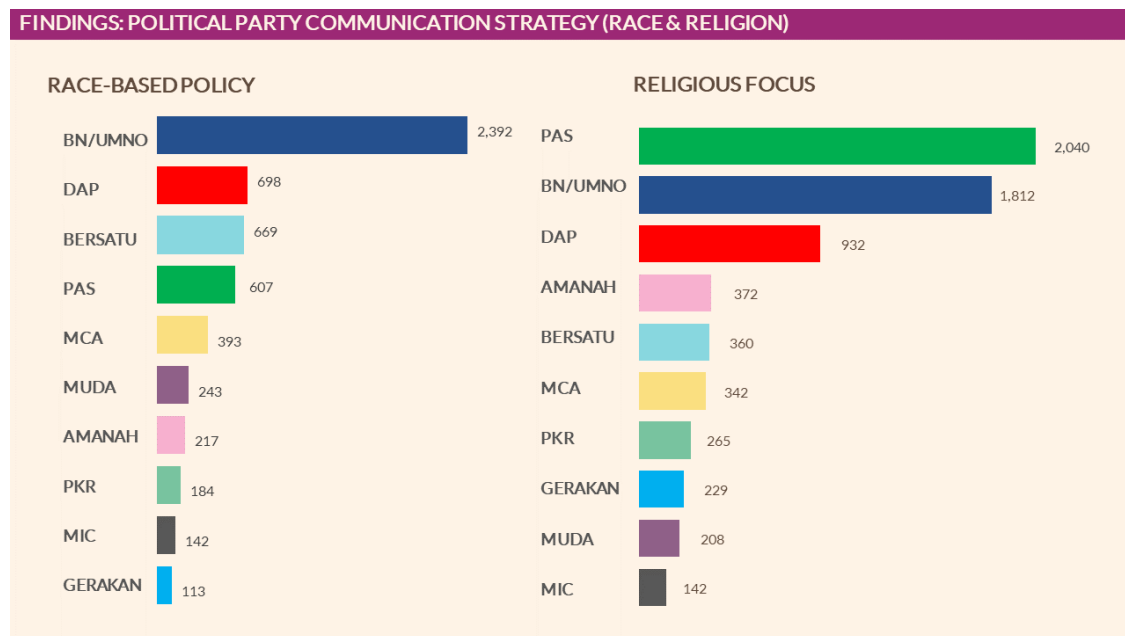


The largest portion of messages from PH also fell under the Politics theme (48%). The coalition promoted the former CM as the better candidate to govern the state based on previous track record via discussions and policy suggestions on issues like floods. The second largest portion of messages from PH concerned Race and Religion (39%). Most of PH's messages are focused on condemning BN, UMNO and PN by claiming that these parties are corrupted parties that would "rule with divisiveness and double-standards while using their resources to enrich their cronies. They also mentioned that BN and PN's response to the Timah issue shows that these parties are neglecting the rights and benefits of the non-bumiputera, reiterating that PH is there to create a Malaysia that is not ruled by racial policies. The remainder of the messages were related to the Economy (13%) which highlighted previous achievements such as demolishing GST and securing Tabung Haji, basing it on their previous track record governing the state.



The largest portion of messages from PN fell under Race and Religion (56%). The coalition promoted candidates based on religious factors (i.e., morality standards of a particular religion) and called for unity of the religious community. Key messages by the coalition partner, PAS were mostly in "Penyatuan Ummah", which is targeted at the Muslim community. By holding strong to Islamic values and morality, PAS promoted their candidates as the right choice to be part of the state government. Additionally, the issue of Timah and Kedah 4D ban were part of the communication strategy by PAS, where PAS was defending their actions by claiming that both alcohol and gambling are prohibited by other religions. The second largest portion of messages from PN were about Politics (25%). Collaboration

between two component parties as well as the political strategy of nominating a female candidate for the position of CM were issues that gained voters' attention. The remaining messages were related to the Economy (19%) in terms of recovery of the national economy after the pandemic. One of the major calls by the PN coalition is on creating a stable and clean state government in Melaka.



Overview of Mentions of Race and Religion according to Coalition

Our findings revealed that race and religion constitute a huge percentage of the three coalition communication strategies in the Melaka state elections. Comparing the number of mentions related to race and religion contributed by political parties, BN ranked the highest on the topic of race (particularly on race-based policies), pushing the narrative of bumiputera rights and privileges. Additionally, they advocated for the need to uphold the national language. Meanwhile, PH's agenda focused on promoting an inclusive policy for all Malaysians regardless of race, religion and background. PH also criticised BN for the racial split and crony culture. Meanwhile, PN scored the highest of mentions related to religion due to their campaign slogan of Islam Menyatukan Ummah. They were also strong advocates for the closure of 4D shops and the change of the whiskey brand name "Timah".

The use of race and religion by coalition parties, particularly to champion and defend their own ethnicity and religion, appears to be an important tool for coalition parties to appeal to voters of a particular race or religion. The actions from these parties may have enduring impacts on race relations as shown in the impact scores of race and religion during the Melaka state elections. Heated arguments and debates related to race and religion were found to be prevalent in social media due to the messages conveyed by political parties. Though there were coalitions who were banking on messages of unity, the ongoing exchanges between coalition parties accusing one another of being racist may become more prominent, diluting the message conveyed. It is important to note that if race and religion continue to be used by coalition parties in upcoming elections, it may further exacerbate interethnic tension and hinder nation-building exercises.

Implications for Future Elections

Noting the findings from this social media monitoring project, it is imperative that for our country to move forward and to build a Malaysia for all Malaysians, politicians and political parties should take immediate steps to **move away from the use of race and religion in politics**. They should pursue policy actions that truly benefit constituents of all races and religions and not favour a particular ethnic group, as it may create uneasiness and unhappiness among other ethnic groups as they are not provided an equal opportunity. Coalition parties such as BN and PN should stop playing the race and religion card in their campaigns.

It is ironic that on one hand they are calling for a united Malaysia through the #KeluargaMalaysia campaign and the recent launch of the National Unity Blueprint and National Unity Action Plan 2021 - 2030, while on the other hand, they are campaigning for a particular ethnic and religious group. Therefore, we call upon all politicians and political parties to **practice what they preach and not backtrack on the policies that they introduce at the federal level**. As elected representatives, they have a responsibility for all Malaysian citizens and not a particular ethnic and religious group.

We also call upon voters to **hold their elected representatives accountable**. As voters, we have the responsibility to carefully scrutinise our electoral candidates before voting for them. We need to choose wisely and denounce politicians and political parties that exploit race and religion for their own benefit. It is hoped that there will be a drop in the use of race and religion in the upcoming Johor elections and future elections. We look forward to improvements in Malaysian politics where people of all races and religions are free from exploitation by politicians and treated fairly in the country they are proud to call home.

Malaysia's Federal Constitution and National Principles

Malaysia's Federal Constitution

The Federal Constitution of Malaysia is a written constitution that came into force in 1957 and is the **supreme law** of Malaysia, consisting of a total of 183 Articles. The Constitution is an amalgamation of two former pieces of legislation namely the Federation of Malaya Agreement (1948) and the Independence Constitution (1957). The Federal Constitution of Malaysia establishes the Federation as a constitutional monarchy in which the Yang di-Pertuan Agong rules as the Head of State and further established 3 branches of the government i.e., the **Legislative** arm, namely the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara (Senate); the **Judiciary** led by the Federal Court, and the **Executive** arm led by the Prime Minister and his appointed Cabinet members. It contains provisions which safeguard the interest of all Malaysians. This section highlights specific provisions within the Federal Constitution which upholds equality and non-discrimination.

Article 3

- (1) Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.

Article 4

- (1) This Constitution is the **supreme law of the Federation** and any law passed after Merdeka Day which is inconsistent with this Constitution shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

Article 8

- (1) All persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law.
- (2) Except as expressly authorised by this Constitution there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground only of religion, race, descent or place of birth in any law or in the appointment to any office or employment under a public authority or in the administration of any law relating to the acquisition holding or disposition of property or the establishing or carrying on of any trade, business, profession, vocation or employment
- (3) There shall be no discrimination in favour of a person on the ground that he is a subject of the Rule, of any State.
- (4) No public authority shall discriminate against any person on the ground that he is resident or carrying on business in any part of the Federation outside the jurisdiction of the authority.

Article 12

- (1) Without prejudice to the generality of Article 8, there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the grounds only of religion, race, descent or place of birth—
 - (a) in the administration of any educational institution maintained by a public authority, and, in particular, the admission of pupils or students or the payment of fees; or
 - (b) in providing out of the funds of a public authority financial aid for the maintenance or education of pupils or students in any educational institution

(whether or not maintained by a public authority and whether within or outside the Federation).

- (2) Every religious group has the right to establish and maintain institutions for the education of children in its own religion, and there shall be no discrimination on the ground only of religion in any law relating to such institutions or in the administration of any such law; but it shall be lawful for the Federation or a State to establish or maintain or assist in establishing or maintaining Islamic institutions or provide or assist in providing instruction in the religion of Islam and incur such expenditure as may be necessary for the purpose.

Article 153

- (1) It shall be the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak and the legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of this Article.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, but subject to the provisions of Article 40 and of this Article, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong shall exercise his functions under this Constitution and federal law in such manner as may be necessary to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak and to ensure the reservation for Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak of such proportion as he may deem reasonable of positions in the public service (other than the public service of a State) and of scholarships, exhibitions and other similar educational or training privileges or special facilities given or accorded by the Federal Government and, when any permit or licence for the operation of any trade or business is required by federal law, then, subject to the provisions of that law and this Article, of such permits and licences.
- (7) Nothing in this Article shall operate to deprive or authorize the deprivation of any person of any right, privilege, permit or licence accrued to or enjoyed or held by him or to authorize a refusal to renew to any person any such permit or licence or a refusal to grant to the heirs, successors or assigns of a person any permit or licence when the renewal or grant might reasonably be expected in the ordinary course of events.

National Principles (Rukun Negara)

The National Principles (Rukun Negara) was introduced on 31 August 1970 by the Malaysian Government to celebrate the 13th anniversary of the nation's independence.

Its inception as a national ideology was deemed as a needed response to the “13 May” incident in 1969, following the general election in Malaysia. The outbreak of riots had resulted in the creation of the National Operations Council (*Majlis Gerakan Negara*) to restore peace and stability to Malaysia till 1971. Subsequently, the *Rukun Negara* was used to forge national unity among the citizens primarily through instilling its values and principles through education in schools. Presently, this ideology has become a guiding principle to encourage racial harmony and mutual respect.

In the **Preamble** of the National Principles, Malaysia nurtures the ambitions of:

- Achieving a more perfect unity amongst the whole of her society;
- Preserving a democratic way of life;
- Creating a just society where the prosperity of the country can be enjoyed together in a fair and equitable manner;
- Guaranteeing a liberal approach towards our traditional heritage that is rich and diverse
- Building a progressive society that will make use of science and modern technology.

Core Values

WE, residents of Malaysia, pledge our united efforts to attain these ends guided by these principles:

- BELIEF IN GOD (Kepercayaan kepada Tuhan)
- LOYALTY TO KING AND COUNTRY (Kesetiaan kepada Raja dan Negara)
- SUPREMACY OF THE CONSTITUTION (Keluhuran Perlembagaan)
- RULE OF LAW (Kedaulatan Undang-Undang)
- COURTESY AND MORALITY (Kesopanan dan kesusilaan)

Malaysia's International Commitments to Human Rights

Malaysia's Voluntary Pledges and Commitments for the Candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the Term 2022 – 2024¹⁵¹

Malaysia presents its candidacy for the membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2022-2024 as it is confident that it would be able to serve as a constructive member of the Council. Malaysia is honoured to have been unanimously endorsed by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as ASEAN's candidate to the Council.

If elected to the Human Rights Council, Malaysia pledges to:-

- i. Take a whole-of-society approach in the promotion and protection of human rights in the country, primarily in the assessment, monitoring and implementation of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations
- ii. Cooperate with the OHCHR and other relevant United Nations agencies towards the promotion of human rights in the country and globally
- iii. Continue to engage constructively with the Human Rights Council (HRC) and its mechanisms while espousing a moderate and balanced perspective to nurture a spirit of cooperation
- iv. Implement policies and legislations that promote and protect the rights of the most vulnerable groups
- v. Strengthen efforts to achieve gender equality, women empowerment and eliminate violence against women
- vi. Take greater steps in engaging and empowering youth
- vii. Develop a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights
- viii. Intensify efforts to promote a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment and improve understanding on the effects of climate change on the enjoyment of human rights
- ix. Continue to promote diversity through respect for cultural rights
- x. Continue to strengthen human rights institution and mechanism in Malaysia

¹⁵¹ https://www.kln.gov.my/web/usa_un-new-york/news-from-mission/-/blogs/malaysia-s-candidature-to-the-human-rights-council-term-2022-2024-voluntary-commitments-and-pledges#:~:text=VOLUNTARY%20PLEDGES%20AND%20COMMITMENTS&text=Malaysia%20presents%20its%20candidacy%20for,constructive%20member%20of%20the%20Council.

- xi. Continue to engage constructively with all Member States and stakeholders towards the full realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Towards fulfilling these pledges, Malaysia is committed to:-

- i. Undertaking and promoting a balanced, impartial, universal, non-politicised, and constructive approach to human rights issues at the HRC.
- ii. Deepening cooperation at the international level in supporting the work of various UN actors and mechanisms involved in the promotion and protection of human rights, including promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable, marginalised and minority communities in the country.
- iii. Upholding the principles of a whole-of-society approach by continuing to engage in inter-agency consultations with relevant stakeholders such as the NHRI (SUHAKAM) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in furthering the promotion and protection of human rights for its people.
- iv. Continuing to review the implementation of international human rights instruments that Malaysia is party to. The reviews had led to the withdrawal of several reservations to Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2010.
- v. Engaging closely with the relevant stakeholders on the possibility of signing and ratifying the outstanding international conventions related to human rights, with the aim to achieving a precise and full understanding of the relevant rights and obligations, as well as to consider the possibility of reconciling the standard established by the said instruments with the Federal Constitution and domestic laws.
- vi. Intensifying efforts to raise human rights awareness among all segments of the population including the public service, such as law-enforcement officials, members of the judiciary, government officials and other stakeholders.
- vii. Improving its monitoring mechanism on the UPR process, by using the National Recommendation Tracking Database developed by the OHCHR
- viii. Supporting and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in realising the right to development, including support for ongoing efforts aimed at its operationalisation and implementation.
- ix. Sharing best practices with other Member States and interested partners, including on advancing the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities, poverty eradication, health and education.
- x. Working continuously at the regional level with its partners under the ASEAN framework, in particular, with the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in the promotion of human rights in the region.

- xi. Increasing its bilateral collaborations in terms of technology transfer and the exchange of scientists in vaccine development as Malaysia calls for an affordable, accessible and equitable vaccine and embarks on the roadmap of vaccine development and production.
- xii. Continuing to work hand in hand with the UN and the WHO in improving the lives of our people. The challenges brought about by COVID-19 compel every country, including Malaysia to focus on the rights to physical and mental health; the right to social security; the right to education; and the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, and housing.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any limitation of sovereignty.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 26 (2)

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Article 27 (1)

Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

ASEAN Human Rights Declaration

Malaysia as a Member State of ASEAN had reaffirmed her adherence to the purposes and principles of ASEAN as enshrined in the ASEAN Charter, in particular the respect for an promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the principles of democracy, the rule of law and good governance. In doing so, Malaysia has agreed to uphold the general principles which addresses the issues of racism and racial discrimination.

Provision 2

Every person is entitled to the rights and freedoms set forth herein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, gender, age, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic status, birth, disability or other status.

Provision 3

Every person has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. Every person is equal before the law. Every person is entitled without discrimination to equal protection of the law.

Provision 9

In the realization of the human rights and freedoms contained in this Declaration, the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity, non-discrimination, non- confrontation and avoidance of double standards and politicization, should always be upheld. The process of such realization shall take into account peoples' participation, inclusivity and the need for accountability.

Provision 22

Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. All forms of intolerance, discrimination and incitement of hatred based on religion and beliefs shall be eliminated.

Provision 31 (3)

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of his or her dignity. Education shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in ASEAN Member States. Furthermore, education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in their respective societies, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and enhance the activities of ASEAN for the maintenance of peace.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Malaysia together with other 192 world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 25 September 2015. This is a **global commitment towards a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive development**, with 17 SDGs and 169 targets. Malaysia has put in place an enabling environment to embrace and implement the 17 SDGs in a systematic and measurable manner. The following outlines the Goals that aim to promote inclusivity and equal opportunity.

Goal 10 - Reduced Inequality Within and Among Countries

SDG Target 10.2

By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

SDG Target 10.3

Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

Recommendations from Malaysia's 3rd Universal Periodic Review (2018)

The UPR is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN Member States. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the Human Rights Council, which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to **improve the human rights situations** in their countries and to fulfil their human rights obligations. Under this mechanism, the human rights situation is reviewed every 5 years. The result of each review is reflected in the Final Report of the Working Group, which lists the **recommendations** the State under review will have to implement before the next review.

Malaysia's participation in its Third UPR reflects the Government's commitment to engage with the international community and have continued discourses on human rights. This also demonstrates that Malaysia is open to engage with other UN Member States in a frank, meaningful and robust exchange of views in the field of promotion and protection of human rights such as the accession to international human rights instruments.

Below outlines the recommendations obtained from Malaysia's Third UPR cycle¹⁵².

Recommendation 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 39

Ratify the remaining core international human rights treaties and ensure their proper implementation, including:

- the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
- the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Recommendation 57

Continue efforts aimed at nation-building strategies and the development of a solid legislative, administrative and policy framework, notably to cater for the needs of the vulnerable groups (South Africa)

Recommendation 67

Continue efforts in maintaining social cohesion in the country (Viet Nam)

Recommendation 72

Continue efforts towards strengthening community integration through protecting cultural diversity (Iraq)

¹⁵² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Malaysia's Third Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the UPR Working Group of the United Nations Human Rights Council" 8 November 2018. See: <https://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/-/press-release-malaysia-s-third-universal-periodic-review-upr-by-the-upr-working-group-of-the-united-nations-human-rights-council-8-november-2018-genev>

Recommendation 76

Continue and strengthen efforts in promoting the culture of mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among different religious communities (Cambodia)

Recommendation 128

Continue to implement policies on interreligious harmony, to further promote unity among religions and creeds (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Recommendation 130

Continue the implementation of measures aimed at strengthening inter-ethnic and interreligious interaction in the country (Belarus)

Recommendation 131

Guarantee freedom of religion or belief to all, stemming racial and religious intolerance, including against the Christian community (Croatia)

Recommendation 265

Increase further efforts for social inclusion of migrant workers and integration with the local community, irrespective of their race and religion (Myanmar)

Recommendation 266

Take necessary measures to prevent and punish all forms of violence against migrant workers, including hate crimes and racism (Myanmar)

Conclusions and Recommendations

In today's world, contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia are complex and disturbing. In Malaysia, these issues increasingly lie at the heart of political and social concerns. The trends of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia identified in this report may vary, but they are all significant enough to be of concern.

These disturbing developments arouse sensitivity towards and heightened awareness of identity in individuals and communities alike. From such grounds, racism, discrimination and xenophobia draw sustenance, are grown and propagated to the extent that they become common. Oversensitivity about one's ethnic identity aggravates attitudes based on the notion of nation, community, group, race, religion, way of life and lifestyle. To cope with this situation, Malaysia needs to devise specific responses at both local and national level.

Collective effort by multiple/various stakeholders is required to combat the rising frequency of incidents of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. Immediate actions must be taken to overcome the increased presence of racial and religious politics that continue to erode the social fabric of the nation. **Politicians should stop trumpeting inclusivity and togetherness when they themselves revert to the use of racial rhetoric to seize and maintain power.** They should stop providing lip service to appease the public when they themselves are not willing to practice what they preach.

Additionally, it is imperative for the government to implement policies and programmes aimed to unite the nation, create an inclusive society, and maintain the harmony of our multi-racial and multi-religious country. The National Unity Blueprint for instance, is welcomed, but the **subsequent implementation of the blueprint and action plan is needed.** It should not exist only on paper but should comprise **large-scale awareness campaigns directed at the general public and potential victims**, as well as **training for the appropriate officials.** Hence, it is important to **set up an independent national body or commission** with the unique responsibility of fighting racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

Malaysia also needs to uphold their commitments and pledges at the international level. While Malaysia has demonstrated her commitment to promote equality and non-discrimination internationally, the situation on the ground does not reflect that. Therefore, the government of Malaysia should **demonstrate its unequivocal commitment to make significant improvements and advancements to its human rights track record** especially in the area of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

Serious attention needs to be given to address the issue of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in Malaysia. It is timely for our country to institutionalize a new Malaysia where every Malaysian is treated equally. The government of Malaysia needs to respect and engage diversity from the lens of human rights, in congruence with international standards and norms. This approach does not take away any legal provisions that were instituted as affirmative action policies as positive discrimination is allowed for the sole reason of achieving equality.

Glossary

ACCIN	Allied Coordinating Committee of Islamic NGOs
AICHR	ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights
AIM	Amnesty International Malaysia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BAM	Badminton Association of Malaysia
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women
CM	Chief Minister
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DBP	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka
EPF	Employees Provident Fund
FAM	Football Association of Malaysia
FMFF	Federation of Malaysian Freight Forwarders
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GERAKAN	Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (People's Movement Party of Malaysia)
GLC	Government-linked companies
GLIC	Government-Linked Investment Companies
GPS	Gabungan Parti Sarawak
GRS	Gabungan Rakyat Sabah
GST	Goods & Services Tax
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
IILS	International Integrated Logistics Services
IKRAM	Pertubuhan IKRAM Malaysia
IMAN	Integrated Malaysian Actors Network
ISMA	Ikatan Muslimin Malaysia (Malaysian Muslim Solidarity)
JAIS	Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (Selangor Islamic Religious Council)
JAKIM	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia)
JDT	Johor Darul Ta'zim Football Club
JHEAINS	Negeri Sembilan Islamic Religious Affairs Department
Jiao Zong	United Chinese School Teachers' Association
KLFA	Kuala Lumpur Football Association
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association

MCCBCHST Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism

MCO Movement Control Order

MFL Malaysia Football League

MIC Malaysian Indian Congress

MIDA Malaysian Investment Development Authority

MN Muafakat Nasional

MOH Ministry of Health

MOF Ministry of Finance

MP Member of Parliament

MPKK Majlis Perbandaran Kuala Kangsar (Kuala Kangsar Municipal Council)

N3 No Nonsense Netizens

NEP New Economic Policy

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

NHRI National Human Rights Institution

NUCC National Unity Consultative Council

OHCHR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

PAS Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party)

PBS Parti Bersatu Sabah (United Sabah Party)

Pemenang Penang Malay Association

PERDIM Pertubuhan Doktor-doktor Islam Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Doctors Association)

Perkasa Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa (Mighty Native Organisation)

PH Pakatan Harapan (Hope Alliance)

PKR Parti Keadilan Rakyat (People's Justice Party)

PN Perikatan Nasional (National Alliance)

PPMM Persatuan Pengguna Melayu Malaysia (Malay Consumers Association of Malaysia)

PPPKAM Persatuan Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam Malaysia (Malaysian Public Health Medical Association)

PROHAM Society for the Promotion of Human Rights

PSB Parti Sarawak Bersatu (United Sarawak Party)

PSS Pas Sementara Sabah (Sabah Temporary Pass)

PUTRA Parti Bumiputera Perkasa Malaysia (Mighty Malaysian Bumiputera Party)

Sabah FC Sabah Football Club

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

Selangor FC Selangor Football Club

SJK(C) Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina) (National-type Chinese primary school)

SMK Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (National Secondary School)

SPM Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education)

STAR Parti Solidariti Tanah Airku (Homeland Solidarity Party)

SUHAKAM Suruhanjaya Hak Asasi Manusia Malaysia (Human Rights Commission of Malaysia)

UDA UDA Holdings Bhd (formerly Urban Development Authority of Malaysia)

UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UiTM Universiti Teknologi Mara (Mara Technology University)
UKM Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
UMNO United Malays National Organisation
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPKO United Progressive Kinabalu Organization
UPR Universal Periodic Review
WHO World Health Organization
WSH World Squash Federation
12MP 12th Malaysia Plan

About KOMAS

Pusat KOMAS is a human rights organisation in Malaysia which was established in 1993. KOMAS actively promotes equality and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination in Malaysia. #akubangsamalaysia.

Since its inception, KOMAS has conducted human rights workshops, forums and conferences to promote social cohesion and national unity in Malaysia. In addition, KOMAS leads the national campaign to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in Malaysia. As part of its advocacy to ratify ICERD, KOMAS has been engaging the federal, state and local government and conducted dialogues with the grassroots to increase the knowledge and awareness on the issue of Racial Discrimination in Malaysia and the importance of the ratification of ICERD.

Pusat KOMAS has been working in close collaboration with Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia (JKOASM) since 1993. JKOASM is a network of indigenous villages in Peninsular Malaysia, that advocates the issues of the Orang Asli and empowers the communities on their ancestral rights and basic human rights.

KOMAS has always felt proud to be at the forefront along other civil society movements in the promotion and enhancement of democracy, equality and human rights in Malaysia.

KOMAS has been working in collaboration with several NGO coalitions in Malaysia such as BERSIH 2.0, the Coalition of Malaysian NGOs (COMANGO) for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, Malaysian Civil Society Organizations on Sustainable Development Goals (CSO-SDG Alliance), the Ratify ICERD Working Group and Gabungan Bertindak Malaysia (GBM). Furthermore, KOMAS is also an active participant at the regional level.

KOMAS is an accredited member of Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum Asia) and the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR). In addition, KOMAS is a voting member of the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS). KOMAS is also an active participant of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ ASEAN's Peoples Forum (ACSC/APF) and had played the secretariat and co-secretariat role in Malaysia and Timor Leste in 2015 and 2016 respectively.



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