

Paving the way for a more united M'sia: National Unity ministry calls on all netizens to maintain peace, harmony

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Everyone is responsible: KPN needs each individual support for the betterment of the nation

KUALA LUMPUR (March 7): The Ministry of National Unity (KPN) believes every netizen plays an essential role in ensuring that the peace and harmony of the country is maintained.

Speaking to The Borneo Post in a recent interview, National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang said that the unity of the country is at a moderate and controlled level, as per the IPNas (National Unity Index) 2.0 study and there is nothing to be worried about, although he said it is every netizen's responsibility to maintain the country's peace.

Datuk Aaron said: "I don't see the issue of racism as an issue for this country because we often witness, our people like to help each other regardless of our differences."

With the recently launched Kembara Perpaduan Madani program, the ministry is set to carry out various initiatives which are expected to further unite the people of the nation besides catering to the needs of the underprivileged regardless of religious orientation.



The Kembara Perpaduan Malaysia Madani program was launched recently by National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang. Also present was KPN's chief secretary, Datuk Indera Noridah Abdul Rahim.

As a multiracial country, Malaysia has thrived through difficult times, including the flood issues which have caused various people to vacate their homes, and any true Malaysian can hardly forget the 'introduction' period of Covid-19 where we witnessed (safe to say) zero racial boundaries amidst the strict social distancing phases.

However, when it comes to social media, it may seem that there is still a small group of people that condemn other races or ways of being.

Addressing this topic, National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron commented that if there is an understanding and respect towards others, there will hardly be any issue of this kind.

"If one cannot integrate with other races or people, that is when the situation becomes difficult," Datuk Aaron speculated.

This is where the unity ministry comes in; organizing various programs, striving for the unity of people, and helping them understand each other's culture and beliefs.



Responsible for the unity in the country, the national unity ministry is always monitoring any such issues that can threaten the country's peace and harmony. Using an online system known as e-SEPAKAT, the government takes intervention steps based on the reported incidents in the system.

Law-wise, there are multiple sections pertaining to ensuring all races are respected, including section 298 of the Penal Code which is the offense of uttering words or doing other acts with the deliberate intention of hurting someone's religious feelings (KDN), and section 504 of the Penal Code which is the offense of deliberately insulting with the intention of causing a breach of the peace.

When it comes to unity, the element of patriotism holds a crucial position. Understanding its importance to be instilled in the hearts of society from a very young age, the ministry developed the 'Tabika Perpaduan' program which started in 1976.

Adhering to current needs, the new plan under Tabika Perpaduan will oversee 10 different initiatives including the national education module, third language basic communication module, and self-management skills module.

Meanwhile, Datuk Aaron called on the media and general public to be mindful when sharing news and speaking about other races. He opined that the media is a positive element when it comes to distributing information fast. In fact, the government too uses digital platforms such as Tik Tok, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram as mediums to spread program-related information.

However, provocative messages are also evident with the wide use of social media.

"I advise the people to be more sensitive. I believe people are wise enough to judge the good things for the well-being of life."

In terms of the National Unity Policy (Dasar Perpaduan Negara), there are three core elements: patriotism and democracy, national identity, and the unity ecosystem. This policy is supported by the skeleton action plan (blueprint) of national unity (2021-2030) which sets the vision whereas the national unity action plan (2021-2025) interprets the aim, objectives, and strategies of the policy through well-explained programs and actions. In a nutshell, there is already a well-laid out system(s), just waiting to reap its results.

In the effort to enhance unity in the nation, the ministry identified these matters as its main challenges: ethnicity, religion, social class, education, language, generation gap, gender, federalism politics, urban-rural space, and media.

Here, Datuk Aaron again stressed: "The diversity of religions requires each believer to be more sensitive and respect each other to ensure harmony."

In Malaysia, all are allowed to practice their religions, without compromising Islam as the main one, he said. In fact, the recent budget allocation for the Ministry of National Unity saw Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim allocating a total of 50 million ringgit to repair and upgrade non-Muslim worship homes. This shows the care and consideration of the government towards the welfare of every race, thus bringing people more united and supportive of each other and the nation.



Minister of National Unity, Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang strongly believes that Malaysians should always respect one another in order to maintain peace

The Borneo Post asked Datuk Aaron whether he views East Malaysia to be more united compared to the West regions. Datuk Aaron, who is also a Member of Parliament for Kanowit, replied that in Sarawak, the people do not segregate themselves. According to him, everyone is usually always together and they bond very closely surpassing racial differences. He gave the example of eating together with friends from different religions and sometimes even sharing food with each other.

"Malaysia is blessed with a very united nation," commented the Sarawak-born minister.

In line with Unity Week which will be celebrated from 20th to the 26th of May, the national unity ministry is anticipating collaborations with various other ministries and government agencies. Themed 'Unity in Diversity', the celebration will comprise 'Showcase Semarak Kenegaraan', Unity Symposium, Rahmah Bazaar, and Unity Sports among other programs. The national celebration will be held in Kuching, Sarawak.

The national unity index or Indeks Perpaduan Nasional (IPNas) has been carried out by the ministry and shown social cohesion increased 6.2% (0.629) in 2022 from the index value of 0.567 achieved in 2018. This study will be carried out every two years.

"Unconsciously, changes are happening that we don't see yet. In the long term, we will assess it. As long as we don't have riots or civil war, we are in a happy state," Datuk Aaron added.

The national unity ministry is constantly striving to bring netizens closer to one another as well as invoking the spirit of patriotism in the souls of Malaysians. The strategy outlined through the National Unity Policy is to increase literacy, understanding, and appreciation of the Federal Constitution and the Rukun Negara in order to create a society that has a spirit of love for the country to maintain harmony, peace, and well-being of the people. Datuk Aaron said that this is in line with the development of Madani Malaysia, which emphasizes the strength of history and the great heritage of the Pluralism of Malaysia.

"By coming together, it is already a beginning. Maintaining ourselves together is already the process. And when we work on all these issues, it is already a success."

