



advisory

December 2021 No.11

IMAN Research

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IMAN RESEARCH

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Based in Kuala Lumpur, IMAN Research is a think tank which focuses on the domains of protective security, peacebuilding and sustainable development. Research is spearheaded by experience in the areas of prevention/counter violent extremism, ethnic-religious issues, social policy and community resilience, and engagement such as participatory approach in urban policy and research and psycho-social intervention with communities in or from conflict zones.

editorial letter

As this advisory goes ‘to print’ so to speak, 2021 is ending on a rather sombre note. Many Malaysians are still trying to recover from the worst flooding experienced since the 1971 Kuala Lumpur floods which paralysed the city. The floods have a knock-down effect, as many cancellations have to be made for year-end holidays, affecting the domestic tourism industry which is already haemorrhaging from the movement control orders and travel bans caused by the pandemic. Some businesses may not recover, while many more will have to face the difficult task of rebuilding their homes, business and lives. The number of deaths has shocked the country; we have had floods before but we have not lost these many lives to it. In summary 2021 ends with the Rakyat having to still fight against the pandemic and at the same time rebuild from the devastation of the floods

In this year-end issue, the articles are written in both English and Bahasa Malaysia. We will look at the fracturedness of our institutions and the political instability that is causing us to be ill-prepared in dealing with a crisis. We need to start questioning the whole system and not just political leaders. We also have a review of Sabah politics in light of the recent passing of a bill to amend the Federal Constitution pertaining to the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

Refugees and migrants remain a priority issue especially as climate change continues to cause havoc, pushing people from poorer countries to move. Malaysia will continue to be a destination while our government is still in denial (about many things!)

Lastly, after two years of the pandemic, the issue of double standards in implementation of the national Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures continues, angering Malaysians. Will we ever learn?

*Altaf Deviyati
Managing Director*

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Fractured Institutions

By: Altaf Deviyati



Malaysia is ending 2021 just as how it started early in the year: with heavy floods. However, this time around, the situation is a national disaster; they have to be the worst floods in living memory affecting eight states on the Peninsula, such as Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Pahang, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Kelantan and Terengganu concurrently with the states of Pahang and Selangor suffering the most.

Tropical depression on the eastern coast of Malaysia brought torrential rain throughout the Peninsula for three days. A phenomenon known as Kepala Air or rainforest watershed happened, where a sudden column of water unexpectedly gushes downstream, spilling over into the terrain as well as into the rivers resulting in the massive and strong floods particularly in Hulu Langat, Selangor. The highly dense residential areas of Selangor near low-lying flood basins made the flooding even worse, as the rain water had nowhere to go. They had no chance.

70,000 people became internally displaced, with 48 people dead and five still missing. The Klang Valley was among the worst hit. The floods resulted in dozens of roads closed affecting traffic, public transportation and business, not to mention the unscheduled water cuts and electricity disruption. Unofficial estimate of economic loss is said to be USD200 million, which some say is a rather conservative estimate. The government has been severely criticised for its late response, being disorganised and rather unfeeling towards the victims. The search and rescue missions were hampered by the lack of assets such as boats to navigate through the waterways formed around residential areas that was further exacerbated by coordination issues between authorities. To make matters worse, the image of the Prime Minister cutting cake during an UMNO division meeting while people were climbing on rooftops in Shah Alam only further angered the public.

The floods not only proved the authorities' unpreparedness, but brought to light key issues of governance (the lack of it) at both the Federal and State levels. The absence of the National Agency for Disaster Management (NADMA) at the onset of the floods was appalling, even as social media was being flooded with scenes from ground zero. The Malaysian Meteorology Department had already warned of the unusual heavy rains to be expected in the Peninsular. While criticism is targeted towards elected leaders in government and rightfully so, questions on the role of civil service also rose. Irrespective of who is elected, civil service is to ensure that government machinery runs especially during critical times.

The floods have also opened a Pandora's box on city planning and development. From maintenance of the city drainage system to the planning and development permits, this all comes under the caveat of local government. One of the videos that went viral from Ulu Langat was not only the gushing waters that swept village houses but also tree logs coming from upstream. As mentioned above, a Kepala Air phenomenon does not happen out of nowhere and it does not bring with it timber logs. Both legal and illegal

logging occurring in Selangor and Pahang have ruined the natural ecosystem which would have been able to absorb some of the severity of the floods. A local government, or local council, is the key administrative body responsible for local issues such as planning, community development and the environment. Whether it's managing biodiversity, biosecurity, climate change, contaminated lands or water resources, local councils play a critical role in ensuring environment policy and ensuring that regulations are implemented. Hence, the role of local government as the vanguard of our natural resources as well as cities and towns is in question.



Photo credit: Mildly Useful | Unsplash

As the floods start to subside and the mammoth job of cleaning up commences, sadness will turn to anger, but this anger needs to be channeled constructively. The public have already started asking questions: were there cost cutting measures done in lieu of water catchment areas within residential developments, would the Canal city project that was scrapped in 2009 by the Selangor government helped to mitigate the impact of the floods and why have there been increasing logging within reserved lands? These questions would be easier to answer had we an elected local government. The centralisation of the current system was one key reason why the response was badly managed but more importantly, local authorities' will not be easily held accountable for bad planning, corruption and leakages etc. Hence it would be interesting to see, as a result of the recent floods, will it push the public to demand for better accountability and transparency by demanding for local government elections, starting with Selangor.

To the surprise of many, the Parliament speaker rejected a motion to debate on the recent flooding when parliament session commenced the following Monday on the grounds that it was not on the Agenda. Even Members of Parliament and supporters from the ruling coalition disagreed that the biggest natural disaster to have hit the country was not being debated in Parliament. The Parliament is the platform where the

government needs to be accountable towards the public through three main functions; lawmaking, oversight and representation. The Speaker's reasoning gives the impression that not only is he not neutral and objective but that the government has something to hide.

2021 has been a challenging year to say the least and it's ending on a worrying note. Apart from Covid-19, the key theme throughout the year was democratic failure. Political institutions that should have been able to sustain democracy were unable to perform. From a state of emergency declared to the suspension of Parliament. Even the change in premiership and subsequent signing of the Transformation and Political stability MoU with the opposition coalition, that was to pave the way for a stronger bipartisan cooperation in the face of Covid-19, failed to live up to expectations. As we are in the final week of 2021, Malaysian United Democratic Alliance party or MUDA for short won its legal battle to register as a political party. MUDA which literally translates to youth, has won many hearts since they were visibly present without pretense as volunteers in the flood ravaged areas of Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Pahang. Its leaders all under the age of 35 are giving much needed hope for a new generation of empathetic leaders.

All the best, Malaysia and Malaysians! We certainly need the luck! 🌟



Photo credit: Zulhezan

Passage for Refuge in the Time of Climate Crises

By: Bujang Senang

Photo credit: Bernama



Photo credit: Ahmed Akacha | Unsplash

According to the United Nation, the number of the world's refugee population in 2021 stands at a staggering 84 million, largely as a result of ongoing conflicts, economic exploitation and competition for natural resources. By 2050, the number of refugees would triple the current figure at about 220 million, and not necessarily through war and economic hardships, but through the environmental degradations that we

are already experiencing in recent decades. Rising sea level is imminent but politicians keep saying climate change is an act of God. If this unprecedented trajectory is not addressed, by the time it reaches the peak, who would bear the brunt of hosting displaced people in millions, victims of capitalism and greed as a whole? Are they merely collateral damage?

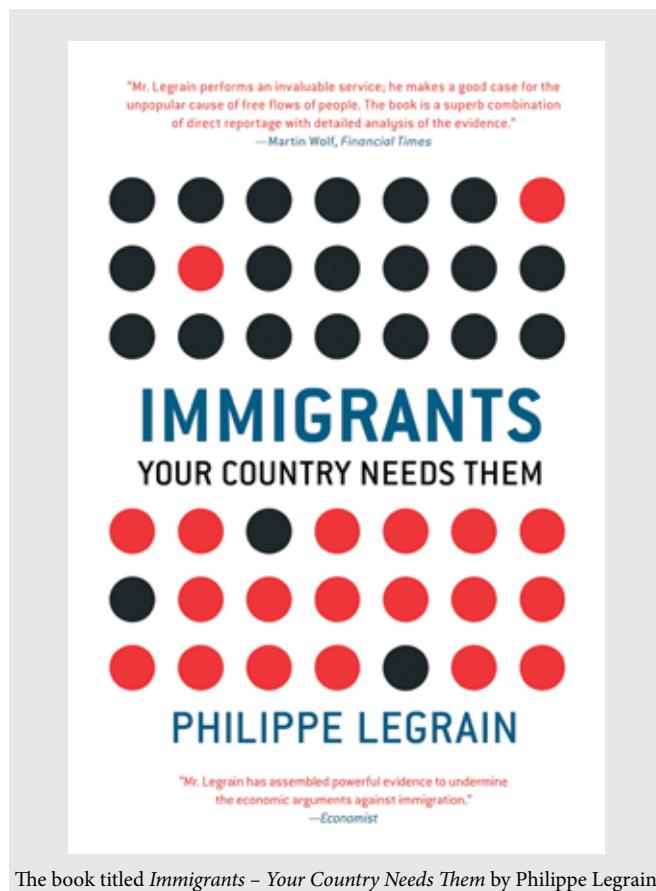
The world is witnessing wars on multiple fronts; in fact World War 2 for instance have decimated more than eight million people in a span of six years and the following decades saw wars and conflicts continuing in a fashion where it's inevitable to ignore, uprooting people from the safety of their homes. In the last few years, we have witnessed yet another displacement of a population from its civilizations, such as that in Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and places where natural resources are contested and geopolitical tit-for-tat continues to advocate for further armaments.

During the COP26 in Glasgow last month, member countries met to (re)negotiate their commitments to reduce greenhouse emission. It is a culmination of the first climate conference in Paris in 2015 that was set to reduce the global heat caused by carbon emissions to a workable two degree Celsius. It ended up as a cliché. Regrettably, the target is amiss with the global temperature rising and the glacier melting fast, against all the efforts by the world's organizations and individual countries to bring down the impact of natural catastrophes and high carbon economies. In between these commotions are human population, wildlife and natural ecosystems that are facing the ultimate challenge. Once again, the question is who shall take the blame for all the mishaps?

As a result of the constant shift of climate patterns, and human greed to be the mightiest and powerful, the weak and the poorest are the first to suffer, and the last to be attended to. Within the last century, wars and conflicts have resulted in large scale human displacements, some within national borders, but most of today's refugees experience international condemnation because very few countries are willing to take up refugees on humanitarian grounds. Most refugees would not go anywhere foreign than their own abode home if they are not subjugated or forced to leave, by sheer geopolitical convolution." People in low-lying areas such as those in the South Pacific islands, countries like Bangladesh, Maldives or even islands in the open oceans between continents, will be totally wiped out. While these countries are not at war for political or economic reasons, the

people will become environmental refugees at their own peril. How are we to accommodate 220 million refugees in 30years, and what mechanisms are in place to manage the crisis before it becomes irreversible? As it stands, most countries have yet to consider food security as national importance, let alone to devise solutions for potential catastrophe.

The book titled *Immigrants – Your Country Needs Them* by Philippe Legrain tells compelling first-hand reporting from around the world about our socio-economic appetite and a broad understanding of what's at stake politically and culturally vis-à-vis migrants. According to Legrain, "People's movement across borders is inevitable, and we should generally welcome them, because they do the jobs we can't or won't do, and their diversity enriches us all." Many governments are not seeing this and often argue that refugees or migrants are social problems, and whatever individual countries do to the refugee population within their jurisdictions are matters of internal policies. We have failed to see that human migrations have occurred since the dawn of time, and have helped build human civilizations and systems that have helped us navigate the unpredictable weather.



The book titled *Immigrants – Your Country Needs Them* by Philippe Legrain

In Malaysia, the common premise against the refugee people and the migrants are that they are taking away our national wealth, and that their presence on the soil would only allow more “alien” people from joining in. According to the latest statistics by the UNHCR, Malaysia is home to 180,000 refugees, mostly those who come from war-torn countries, near and far. Malaysia’s relative peace and sound economy have attracted many to come to create a new life. Yet the successive Malaysian governments have not fully embraced them because of ethno-nationalist political views. There’s also a lack of public and political will when it comes to internationalizing the community other than our own.

The rhetoric that the Rohingyas or the Moros, Afghans and Syrians, are ill-minded or potential national security threats are both appalling and insensitive especially when those who seek refuge are forced to do so against their will. Malaysians often ridicule the refugee communities because they don’t understand the economic cost of conflict, and the Malaysian government continues to avoid its moral obligations to provide assistance or recognize refugees under the international Refugee Convention, and even the most basic of international covenants that upholds human rights and dignity.

Today, we are at the crossroads of exacerbating the worst humanitarian crisis, and finding solu-

tions to a damned future we are preparing the next generation for. Either way, the time is now or all hell will break loose. Countries that are already affected by climate disasters and those contested by divisions, will only make so few people the richest, and billions the poorest. The territorial wars for resources in the Middle East, Africa, Asia have only produced cultural genocide and the loss of great talents.

Countries that are not at war, should do two important things to end collective suffering. First, a country like Malaysia can welcome refugees regardless of their origin or status within its means as a developed country to a respected cosmopolitanism. Malaysia is after all a magnet of migrants that have made us what we are today, with overlapping identities that goes beyond national borders. Secondly, a cosmopolitan Malaysia will be likely less insecure about its potential status, because the centre of intellectualism lies with the people of mixed backgrounds, be it from the war refugees or the environmental ones.

It should be noted that whether the refugees are that from conflict, or the environmental destruction, the one thing we always long for is a place to call home. Once that is achieved then only, we can talk about a nation. This is proper nation building. 



Photo credit: Sam Mann | Unsplash

Covid-19 dan Antara Dua Darjat

Oleh: Nadia Lukman



Image: Shaw Brothers

Pada tahun 1960, P.Ramlee menerbitkan sebuah filem berjudul Antara Dua Darjat. Karya seniman P.Ramlee tersebut bermula dengan babak sebuah kereta tersangkut dalam lumpur kerana hujan lebat. Tengku Zaleha yang duduk di dalam kereta bersama ayahandanya merupakan keturunan diraja manakala Ghazali yang menolak bawah dan berlumuran dengan lumpur lelaki merupakan keturunan rakyat biasa. Kedua-dua Tengku Zaleha dan Ghazali yang dilakonkan oleh Saadiah dan P.Ramlee kemudiannya mula jatuh cinta. Babak-babak kemudiannya menceritakan penderitaan yang dilalui dua orang dalam bercinta, terhalang dek status, harta dan keturunan. Betapa tragisnya kisah percintaan mereka hingga meragut nyawa beberapa orang, Yang Chik, Tengku Abdullah dan Tengku Mukhri. Kisah percintaan yang walaupun berlumuran darah, namun utuh dek keteguhan cinta Tengku Zaleha dan Ghazali.

Kini, 60 tahun berlalu sejak keluarnya filem Antara Dua Darjat, tetapi persoalan kelas dan status sosioekonomi masih menghantui Malaysia, negara yang dicintai. Pandemik COVID-19 telah membongkarkan ketidakadilan yang sudah pun tersulam rapi dalam kehidupan seharian masyarakat Malaysia. Ketidakseimbangan atau

sikap pilih kasih yang berlaku dalam penguatan kuasaan Prosedur Operasi Standard (SOP) di Malaysia menyebabkan masyarakat sudah tidak lagi merasa hormat atau memandang serius arahan kerajaan dalam usaha mengawal pandemik COVID-19. Dan tiada siapa yang harus dipersalahkan selain kerajaan yang terang-terangan mengamalkan sikap pilih kasih dalam menguatkuasakan SOP. Kelemahan kerajaan membolehkan mereka yang berkuasa, berada dan berharta mengeksplorasi saluran-saluran yang ada untuk ingkar arahan penjarakkan fizikal, memakai politik muka mahupun merentas negeri atas alasan peribadi.

Lihat saja kompaun yang dikenakan kepada pengajur program 100 Hari Aspirasi Keluarga Malaysia yang bertempat di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur (KLCC) baru-baru ini. Akibat kesesakan yang berlaku di salah satu booth program berkenaan, pengajur dikenakan kompaun RM1,000 selain kaunter diskaun saman Jabatan Pengangkutan Jalan dan Polis Diraja Malaysia diarahkan tutup oleh Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM). Manakala organisasi lain seperti ibu pejabat Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) dan pemilik premis kelab malam yang didapati tidak mematuhi Prosedur Operasi Standard (SOP) bagi mengawal penularan COVID-19 masing-masing dikenakan kompaun lebih daripada RM10,000. Melihat kompaun rendah yang dikenakan kepada pengajur program 100 Hari Aspirasi Keluarga Malaysia yang gagal mematuhi SOP, warganet segera membuat perbandingan dengan beberapa organisasi lain yang telah menerima kompaun lebih dari RM1,000. Rasa tidak puas hati dan tanggapan bahawa penguatan kuasaan SOP oleh pihak berkuasa dilihat berat sebelah terus disuarakan oleh rakyat melalui media sosial.

Banyak lagi kes lain yang telah berlaku sepanjang 2021 yang telah menyebabkan masyarakat mempunyai persepsi bahawa penguatan kuasa bersikap ‘double standard’ dalam menguatkuasakan SOP. Kes Neelofa dan suaminya yang mengadakan majlis perkahwinan tanpa penjarakkan sosial menjadi topik hangat perbualan warganet. Isu pilih kasih dan penguatan kuasaan SOP COVID-19 kemudiannya terus dibangkitkan apabila Neelofa

sekali lagi mampu pergi ke Langkawi dengan suami beliau menggunakan alasan perniagaan ketika halangan rentas negeri masih berkuatkuasa. Bukan itu sahaja, seperti tidak serik, Neelofa sekali lagi merentas negeri ke Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, sekali lagi atas alasan perniagaan bersama suami. Disebabkan pelanggaran serta penguatkuasaan yang dianggap pilih kasih oleh warganet ke atas Neelofa yang dianggap dari kelas atasan, warganet menjadi muak dan hilang rasa hormat atas penguatkuasaan dan SOP yang telah ditetapkan.

Kerajaan sepertinya menyatakan kelemahan Akta 342 Pencegahan dan Pengawalan Penyakit Berjangkit sebagai limitasi jumlah kompaun yang mampu dikenakan. Ataupun kes yang berbeza menyebabkan perbandingan yang dibuat di atas sebagai satu perkara yang tidak adil bagi penjawat awam yang berusaha keras untuk membendung penularan COVID-19. Namun, contoh di atas jelas menunjukkan bagaimana penjawat awam sendiri, malah mereka yang menjawat jawatan nombor satu Malaysia tidak menghiraukan dan mengambil serius usaha membendung penularan COVID-19 demi kepentingan politik. Mari fikirkan, adakah yang menjadi sangat mustahak untuk program 100 Hari Aspirasi Keluarga Malaysia itu diadakan pada waktu-waktu begini? Tidak cukupkah dengan majlis Pra-pelancaran Keluarga Malaysia, majlis pelancaran bulan Keluarga Malaysia yang kemudiannya disusuli dengan program tersebut yang diadakan di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur? Apa keperluan sehingga kita memerlukan tiga Majlis untuk satu program yang mula digagaskan ketika Datuk Wan Azizah menjadi Menteri Wanita, Keluarga dan Masyarakat satu ketika dahulu?

Seperti filem Antara Dua Darjah, contoh-contoh yang diberikan menunjukkan bagaimana darjah, kuasa dan wang memberikan akses kepada golongan atasan atau yang berkuasa untuk tidak mematuhi SOP COVID-19. Dan perkara inilah yang menimbulkan rasa tidak puas hati serta kemarahan rakyat terhadap kerajaan dalam langkah kawalan penyebaran virus COVID-19. Contoh yang diberikan di atas adalah dalam kalangan rakyat biasa yang berada atau mempu-

nyai pangkat. Kedua-dua Neelofa dan pengajur program 100 Hari Aspirasi Keluarga Malaysia mempunyai wang dan kedudukan, samada sebagai pengarah syarikat atau penjawat awam yang menyebabkan mereka mampu menggunakan prosedur atau dokumen yang sah untuk melanggar SOP. Dan tidak seperti rakyat marhaen, mereka mempunyai wang atau jarigan untuk mendapatkan khidmat nasihat undang-undang dalam kes kompaun, jika disabitkan dengan kesalahan.

COVID-19 tidak memilih darjah, pangkat dan harta sebelum menyebarkan kepada seseorang individu. Tetapi pemahaman ini sepertinya tidak sama dalam fikiran sesetengah pentadbiran universiti awam dan institusi pengajian tinggi di Malaysia. Lagi sekali, penggubalan dan penguatkuasaan SOP oleh pihak berkuasa, dalam hal ini merujuk kepada warga kerja institusi pendidikan terbabit, hanya difokuskan kepada pelajar universiti/institusi pendidikan tersebut. Tiada penghantaran makanan dari luar untuk pelajar, tetapi untuk staf tidak mengapa. Tiada lawatan dari ibu bapa atau keluarga terdekat untuk pelajar, tetapi staf yang duduk di luar kampung tiada masalah ulang alik masuk ke dalam universiti tanpa halangan. Penguatkuasaan SOP COVID-19 yang pilih kasih ini boleh dikatakan mencapai tahap tidak berperikemanusiaan sehingga pelajar yang menerima berita ahli keluarga jatuh sakit tidak dibenarkan pulang sehingga dapat dibuktikan ahli keluarga tersebut sudah nazak. Banyak pelajar meluahkan rasa tidak puas hati mereka dalam laman sosial atas tindakan zalim yang dijalankan pihak pengurusan institusi pendidikan.

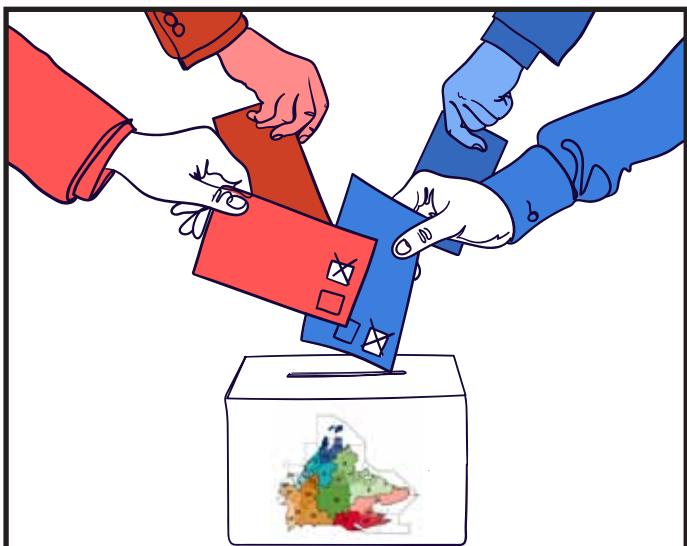
Persoalan yang harus kita tanyakan adalah sampai bila situasi ini harus berterusan. Indeks Jurang Kuasa (Power Distance Index) oleh Hofstede menunjukkan Malaysia menduduki kedudukan yang tinggi dan memiliki jurang kuasa yang besar. Kajian oleh Baker dan Mustafa (2011) kemudiannya menghuraikan bahawa kuasa yang dimiliki seseorang adalah seiringan dengan nilai hormat, latar pendidikan, kepakaran dan kedudukan seseorang individu dalam kumpulan. Kuasa yang dimiliki individu juga menunjukkan kekuatan ikatan antara ahli

kumpulan dalam satu-satu organisasi. Walaupun huraian di atas menunjukkan bahawa jurang kuasa tidak semestinya memberikan konotasi negatif, tetapi dalam hal penguatkuasaan undang-undang dan akses kepada perkhidmatan kerajaan sebagai contohnya, jurang kuasa yang besar menghalang rakyat bawahan atau kumpulan yang lemah atau tidak berkuasa untuk mendapatkan hak dan pembelaan yang sepatutnya. Contoh-contoh situasi yang dihuraikan di atas

hanya mendapat perhatian akibat penularan COVID-19. Hakikatnya, ia bukanlah satu fenomena yang baru. Tidak kira sama ada akibat darjat, pangkat atau etnik sekalipun, keadilan itu milik semua. Bukan hanya untuk sebahagian yang mampu memilikinya. Halangan yang wujud akibat pangkat, darjat mahupun harta harus dihapuskan bagi menjadikan masyarakat Malaysia hidup dalam aman harmoni dan lebih berdaya saing untuk negara tercinta. 



Photo: Social Media Posting



Menamatkan Kitaran Politik Lama di Sabah.

By: Asrin Utong

Lebih 5 abad sejak Sabah merdeka dalam catatan sejarah. Belum padam dan belum luntur semangat setiakawan membentuk Malaysia negara tercinta. Sumpah setia itu diungkap dengan jiwa yang berkobar untuk menamatkan pengabaian, diskriminasi dan mencantas fahaman perpuakan. Sabah sering dilihat sebagai wilayah yang tiada kacau bilau. Didiami oleh masyarakat yang toleran dan harmoni. Walaupun begitu, persoalan yang masih berlegar ketika ini adalah adakah Sabah benar-benar merdeka dan bebas daripada semua tanggapan itu?

Pasca kejatuhan kerajaan Warisan Plus, pakatan politik baharu telah membentuk kerajaan iaitu Gabungan Rakyat Sabah (GRS). Rakyat Sabah sudah terbiasa mencatur nasib di bawah koalisi politik gergasi yang memimpin. Ianya rukun yang sudah menjadi adat politik turun temurun. Setiap kali berlaku peralihan kerajaan, seringkali jugalah rakyat Sabah menjadi bidak di papan catur politik. Politik “melindung raja” adalah anutan ahli politik di Sabah. Melihat kepada perjalanan GRS di Sabah, nampaknya keputusan-keputusan mereka masih boleh dijangka. Masih belum ada sfera politik baru yang betul-betul boleh menjadi pelampung penyelamat.

Masih belum kelihatan wajah baharu dalam pentadbiran percaturan politik Sabah. Idealisme politik yang disua ke mulut rakyat masih pada kitaran yang sama. Malah perkauman, pengabaian hak asas rakyat, dan politik pembunuhan karakter masih menjadi akidah para pemuka politik. Kepercayaan-kepercayaan ini sukar digugat sehingga menjadi perang besar mengorbankan banyak soldadu kecil dalam kalangan rakyat kelas bawah dan para pengundi yang memberi mandat.

Rungutan rakyat Sabah atas isu-isu semisal jalanraya yang tidak dibaikpulih di Sabah adalah indikator jelas bahawa kerajaan gagal menyediakan kemudahan asas bersangkut fasiliti dan infrastruktur awam untuk kegunaan rakyat. Beratus kiriman sinikal menggambarkan jahatnya pengabaian ini dimuatnaik dalam media sosial. Namun, tiada respon yang progresif daripada kerajaan dan agensi yang diamanahkan.

Isu ini tidak hanya terhenti seputar kecuaian kerajaan namun membawa kepada persoalan-persoalan seperti ketelusan mereka dalam menjalankan amanah, sikap responsif sebagai penyerima mandat rakyat, serta integriti sebagai wakil rakyat mendapat julukan “Yang Berhormat”.

Kelemahan parti oposisi di Sabah dan siri-siri pertembungan dalaman parti yang tidak menguntungkan rakyat telah menyebabkan empangan kepercayaan rakyat kepada pengamalan politik partisan pecah. Airnya melimpah membasuh propaganda yang menjadi semak samun dalam masyarakat. Hal ini telah membawa kepada kebangkitan banyak organisasi masyarakat civil terutamanya yang dikemudi oleh anak muda di Sabah. Tiga (3) tahun kebelakangan ini termasuk yang semakin progresif mengadvokasi rakyat Sabah kebelakangan ini; Borneo Komrad, Undi Sabah, Tiada. Guru, Belia di Bawah Bayu dan koalisi-koalisi yang lebih tersusun dan strategis seperti CSO Platform for Reform (CSOP4R- Sabah Chapter) telah mengambil langkah progresif, demokratik dan membangun semangat kolektif dari akar umbi.

Melihat situasi di lapangan, masih berlebaran fahaman perkauman yang tegar dan sentimen anti-orang asing termasuk para pelarian, tanpa dokumen dan migran. Isu-isu semisal penderaaan di Pusat Tahanan Sementara, pengabaian hak buruh migran, keputusan-keputusan yang tidak manusiawi adalah bersifat saran ulangan dari pada rumus-rumus politik sebelum ini. Juga masih menjadi kesenjangan dalam menemukan titik temu antara Bangsa Barat (Pantai Barat Sabah) dan Bangsa Timur (Pantai Timur Sabah) sehingga membawa kepada pergolakan yang besar dan menjadi lombong membaja perkauaman oleh para pemuka politik yang tidak bertanggungjawab.

Perkara ini telah membawa kepada stigma bahawa ada bangsa yang tidak asal daripada bangsa lain. Ada bangsa yang lebih kriminal daripada bangsa lain. Pemikiran prejudis ini tidak mengambilkira konteks keselamatan pada kerangka geopolitik dan keputusan pemerintah yang terlibat. Bangsa timur yang kebanyakannya dalam kalangan Bajau, Bugis dan Suluk (BBS)

lebih dikaitkan dengan unsur keganasan memandangkan kedudukannya lebih hampir kepada wilayah konflik Selatan Filipina tanpa melihat susur jalur sejarah dan budaya sebelum terbentuk sempadan negara bangsa. Demikian juga streotaip bahawa Bangsa Barat yang kebanyakannya terdiri daripada Kadazan, Dusun, Murut (KDM) hanya menuntut hak orang asal dan tanah adat tanpa mempedulikan hak kaum lain. Kompleksiti ini harus dipecahkan dan perseteruan ini harus didamaikan segera.

Tangan-tangan jahat yang memarakkan api pertembungan ini adalah tangan ahli politik yang kotor. Mereka yang mengulang kitaran busuk dalam mengukuhkan kedudukan dan kuasa di Sabah demi kepentingan peribadi. Rakyat Sabah harus melihat ini merentasi ideologi politik dan momokan media yang selalunya berat sebelah. Kita harus memihak dan menyahut semangat kemerdekaan Sabah; bebas daripada fahaman politik tua, mabuk dan memuakkan. 



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