

PSM wants SOP change to help stateless people become Malaysians

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Dr Michael Jeyakumar Devraj speaks to reporters at Ilham Tower in Kuala Lumpur June 27, 2018. — Picture by Yusof Mat Isa

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 — Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) urged the National Registration Department today to amend its standard operating procedure (SOP) to confer citizenship on stateless people.

PSM central committee member Dr Michael Jeyakumar Devaraj today brought some 20 stateless persons, born and bred in Malaysia but denied their right to an identification card, to meet the Institutional Reforms Committee (IRC).

"We are asking the government enact a new SOP to approve citizenship for any children born in Malaysia, to a Malaysian father who can be identified through records like a birth certificate or DNA test.

"On top of that, the SOP needs to be amended so that all children who have been adopted for more than five years by a Malaysian family can also get citizenships," he told reporters at Ilham Tower today.

The former Sg Siput MP said the government should not further marginalise stateless people.

"If the government doesn't come up with a solution, these stateless people will suffer more as their younger generations will also continue to be stateless.

"This doesn't help them or the country move forward," he said.

He also proposed that the Home Ministry grant citizenships to those who have lived in shelter homes, pointing out that a similar struggle will be faced by children who are now under the care of government baby hatches.

"They will have the same problem again if they are only granted an identification card when they find their birth mothers.

"How they are supposed to find them later in life?" he asked.

Ragu Rajamani, 43, who is one of the individuals denied citizenship as he was raised in an orphanage, said he still had trouble opening a retirement savings account because he does not have an identification card.

"I cannot even open a bank account or EPF account, which makes things really difficult for me. I want the new government to help review my case and make life easier for people in the same boat as me," he said.

On October 31, 2016, then-home minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi told the Dewan Rakyat that almost 300,000 children were born in Malaysia but considered stateless.

The IRC, established on May 15, was given 60 days to submit their recommendations to the Council of Eminent Persons, chaired by former Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin.

It is led by former Court of Appeal judges Datuk KC Vohrah and comprises four other members: National Human Rights Society (Hakam) president Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan, National Patriots Association president Brig Jen (Rtd) Datuk Mohamed Arshad Raji, Professor of Law at Universiti Malaya Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi, and lawyer Datuk Mah Weng Kwai.

The recommendations will then be submitted to Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his consideration.