

**(A) OP-ED ON BANGSA MALAYSIA**

**OP-ED #1**

**PEOPLE-CENTRED LEADERSHIP CAN HELP TACKLE HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CRISIS**

*Faisal Aziz*

Malaysia has been struggling with the Covid-19 pandemic for more than a year. Every day the number of Covid-19 cases reported has increased. As of July 15, 2021, we have recorded over 13,215 cases.

This is a clear indication of the government's failure to curb the pandemic. The growing infections based on recently recorded case figures have had a major impact on other sectors.

Our healthcare system is on the brink of collapse, the economy is in shambles, there are increasing mental stress problems, and education is non-functional. This situation is creating a ripple effect that will definitely extend to more distant sectors, including its impact on future generations.

Currently, the people are still struggling because of the failure of our country's leadership to control the spread of Covid-19. The call to close the manufacturing sector to curb the Covid-19 pandemic was criticised by some quarters who want to continue opening up the sector to ensure the economy runs smoothly.

Throughout the pandemic, various parties representing the interests of the public have highlighted the views and methods that can be used to overcome the pandemic. These views need to be taken into account because they are based on solid facts and evidence. But there are those who seem to be comfortable living in denial. Some even divert attention by making empty claims that the whole world is in as bad a state as Malaysia.

Such a comparison is absolutely inaccurate. In New Zealand, the total number of cases recorded is low at 2,790 as of July 14, 2021, with an average daily increase of four. There are differing views on what constitutes strong leadership. Today, there may be simple comparisons with China as well as the United States. Some say the Chinese government has now managed to control the Covid-19 pandemic due to the heavy-handed communist system of government. In contrast, the United States, which puts democracy and human rights principles first, is said to have failed to control the pandemic.

These conclusions are overly simplistic, however. A more critical analysis provides different conclusions. For example, today we are about to enter the eighth month of the emergency period which involved the suspension of Parliament as well as several provisions in the Federal Constitution.

Executive power is interpreted by the attorney-general to include the power to determine the sitting of Parliament at any time. But despite this centralisation of power, the executive or the government still failed to curb the Covid-19 pandemic and has even seen a drastic increase in cases.

Thus, it has been shown that a government that suspends democratic principles is not employing the right vehicle to combat Covid-19. The question now is, how can the country build confidence among the people about the policies and regulations it wants to implement to deal with this pandemic?

In this regard, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's leadership can serve as an example. She spoke honestly and openly about the Covid-19 threat. Policy implementation was based on science and data with good communication with the people. The New Zealand government was also open to all parties as part of the implementation of a check-and-balance mechanism as well as a comprehensive and thorough policy-making process.

This action has resulted in the success of the government under Ardern to empower the people to fulfil their shared responsibility to curb the Covid-19 epidemic.

Shlomo Ben-Ami's article 'Why democracies are better at managing crises' (Australian Strategic Policy Institute) is interesting to read, as he emphasises that most of the countries that have been more successful in fighting Covid-19 are countries that put democracy first.

For example, in Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel is seen as transparent and her ability to communicate effectively with her people allows her to control the situation in the country well. Similarly, the decisive actions taken by other world leaders such as Mette Frederiksen (Danish prime minister), Tsai Ing-wen (Taiwan's president), Erna Solberg (Norwegian prime minister), Katrin Jakobsdottir (Icelandic prime minister), and Sanna Marin (Finland's prime minister) proved that Covid -19 can be addressed without sacrificing democracy.

At the same time, these countries have strong civil society movements which also play a strong role as a check-and-balance agent to further strengthen the policies to resolve the crisis.

The political ecosystem in Malaysia needs to change in order to solve our long-term problems. We need strong, dynamic and transparent leadership. Strong leadership doesn't pivot on any one individual, but on the joint resolve from all levels of society to work towards a better future. What we need is deep and far-reaching systemic reform, and a re-conceptualisation of how we understand and practise democracy.

## **OP-ED #2**

### **KEKUATAN BUDAYA KEMBANGKAN POTENSI BELIA MEMIMPIN BANGSA**

*Firdaus Hamsin*

Setiap kali Hari Raya menjelma, tradisi bermaaf-maafan menjadi rutin murni umat Islam di negara ini. Kemeriahan budaya ini masih dirasai walaupun ketibaannya tidak dapat diraikan seperti biasa untuk mengawal penularan COVID-19.

Kini, arus kemajuan dicapai dalam pembangunan pelbagai aplikasi telekomunikasi dalam talian. Ia memudahkan kita saling berinteraksi. Namun, kita perlu akui ia masih lagi tidak dapat menandingi kehangatan semangat silaturahmi dinyalakan ketika saling ziarah-menziarahi selama ini.

Ada makna penting perlu kita renung di sebalik amalan bermaaf-maafan. Antaranya, ruang muhasabah positif memerlukan seseorang terbuka mengakui setiap kesilapan dilakukannya sebelum ini.

Pada masa sama, tradisi ini menuntut kesediaan kita memaafkan dan melupakan kesalahan dilakukan terhadap diri. Amalan ini tampak ringkas, namun, tidak mudah diterjemahkan kerana menuntut kekuatan emosi untuk mengawal amarah serta mengikis ego.

Sumber kekuatan berbuat demikian dibentuk dua komponen penting. Pertama, kekuatan kerohanian digilap menerusi ibadah puasa, solat tarawih, membaca al-Quran, zikir dan pelbagai amalan lain dibuat secara intensif. Kedua, meliputi kesedaran sosial diterjemahkan menerusi pelbagai kegiatan kebajikan dan amal kemasyarakatan untuk mengupayakan insan memerlukan. Kesimpulannya, amalan bermaaf-maafan ialah refleksi penting terhadap antara fragmen kebudayaan penting negara berakar umbi ajaran Islam.

Malaysia dilatari kerencaman masyarakat majmuk. Kepelbagaian latar belakang membentuk khazanah penting dalam menyepadukan usaha untuk merealisasikan pembangunan bangsa Malaysia.

Kebudayaan ialah elemen penting membentuk etos sesuatu bangsa. Kerencaman pelbagai latar berbeza disepadukan berasaskan perkongsian gagasan nilai murni sejagat. Kebudayaan dan amalan tradisi positif tidak seharusnya dihadkan peranan dalam bentuk wahana kesenian serta hiburan.

Kita tidak seharusnya menjadikan kemajuan material dan permodenan semata-mata sebagai pasak membina bangsa Malaysia. Sandaran indikasi berasaskan statistik ekonomi tidak kukuh kerana terdedah pelbagai faktor semasa.

Tragedi 13 Mei 1969 mengajar kita bagaimana kecemburuan sosial boleh mengancam kestabilan sosiopolitik jika asas pembinaan bangsa disandarkan pada kekuatan ekonomi semata-mata.

Selain pelaksanaan Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB), peristiwa 13 Mei menyaksikan kelahiran Rukun Negara yang antara lain bertujuan mengeratkan perpaduan antara kaum di negara ini.

Wabak COVID-19 melumpuhkan kegiatan ekonomi sejagat. Belia sangat terkesan dengan pandemik ini. Selain terdedah risiko kehilangan pekerjaan, kelompok ini juga terpaksa berhadapan pelbagai tekanan boleh menjejaskan kesihatan mental.

Forum Ekonomi Dunia (WEF) berkongsi dapatan Sapien Labs Inaugural Mental State of the World Report 2020, yang mengatakan generasi muda turut terdedah risiko gangguan kesihatan mental akibat pandemik COVID-19.

Justeru, Hari Belia Negara yang juga diraikan ketika Syawal tahun ini perlu dijadikan detik penting mengukuhkan citra bangsa Malaysia pada masa hadapan.

Generasi muda tidak seharusnya dibiarkan hanyut mendepani gelombang pandemik tanpa sebarang bimbingan. Usaha ini perlu dipupuk mulai sekarang. Selain meningkatkan kapasiti sumber daya insan dalam aspek kepemimpinan, pengurusan dan kemahiran berkaitan, aktivisme perlu menerapkan pembinaan jati diri generasi muda berakarkan perkongsian terhadap etos kehidupan sama.

Kekuatan budaya penting kerana dapat mengembangkan potensi dalam kalangan belia yang akan memimpin bangsa Malaysia ke tahap sosioekonomi dan sosiopolitik lebih membanggakan.

### **OP-ED #3**

#### **KONGSI SEMANGAT KEBANGSAAN ASAS BINA BANGSA MALAYSIA**

Mohd Firdaus Bin Md Hamsin

Ibtihaj Muhammad ialah atlet lawan pedang terkemuka di Amerika Syarikat (AS) mencipta sejarah tersendiri semasa temasya Olimpik di Brazil pada 2016. Selain memenangi gangsa pada acara berpasukan, kelahiran New Jersey ini turut mengukir sejarah sebagai atlet pertama AS mengenakan hijab ke peringkat antarabangsa.

Ibtihaj mengukir nama pada peringkat antarabangsa ketika pertandingan di Grand Palais, Paris. Beliau mengimbau detik menerima sokongan komuniti Muslim yang menyaksikan pertandingan ini. Justeru, Ibtihaj menzahirkan kekecewaan terhadap Dewan Senat Perancis meluluskan undang-undang melarang wanita Muslim bawah umur 18 tahun di negara itu mengenakan hijab.

Larangan itu meliputi tempat awam dan sebarang aktiviti umum, termasuk sukan. Ini menimbulkan kebimbangan terhadap hak serta masa depan antara komuniti terbesar negara terbabit.

Namun, situasi melanda Perancis tidak hanya perlu dicerap dalam kerangka Islamophobia membabitkan komuniti minoriti Muslim semata-mata. Ia sindrom berakar daripada makna sama di sebalik xenophobia, iaitu ketakutan terhadap individu ataupun komuniti berbeza. Ia perlu dipandang serius kerana menzahirkan rupa dalam bentuk keganasan di Barat.

Di negara kelahiran Ibtihaj baru-baru ini, empat orang keturunan Sikh ditembak mati di premis agensi penghantaran terkemuka dunia, FedEx di Indianapolis. Ini mencetuskan kebimbangan bahawa pentadbiran Joe Biden akan terus dibayangi sentimen populisme sempit disemarakkan ketika era pentadbiran Presiden sebelumnya, Donald Trump.

Iktibar di kedua-dua negara ini perlu dipandang serius. Apatah lagi sekian lama Barat mendabik dada bahawa model kenegaraan dan kemasyarakatan mereka perlu diteladani. Ini menunjukkan persoalan pembinaan bangsa masih relevan dalam wacana kenegaraan kontemporari.

Pembinaan bangsa berkait rapat proses mengenal identiti diri. Ahli sains politik, Francis Fukuyama mengatakan identiti adalah lumrah kerana ia asas utama membentuk jati diri dan keberadaan individu dalam kelompok tertentu.

Namun, Fukuyama juga menyatakan identiti boleh dipolitikkan atas justifikasi mendapatkan pengiktirafan untuk kelompok tertentu. Jika dituntut secara ekstrem, ia terbukti mencetuskan perpecahan seperti di Barat. Kekalutan jelas menunjukkan wacana ini memerlukan autoriti kepemimpinan intelektual lebih jelas. Oleh itu, gagasan bangsa Malaysia mempunyai potensi kukuh diketengahkan model rujukan sejagat. Fenomena kemajmukan antara kaum di negara ini perlu dimanfaatkan sebagai kekuatan mencorak masa depan peradaban.

Justeru, Malaysia mempunyai autoriti mengupas persoalan pembinaan bangsa. Asas pembinaan bangsa Malaysia bermula dengan berkongsi semangat kebangsaan sama.

Tokoh Maal Hijrah 2018, Datuk Dr Siddiq Fadzil, mengatakan proses pembinaan bangsa Malaysia harus berasaskan formula kepelbagaian dalam kesatuan. Kepelbagaian kaum, agama dan budaya ialah aset kekuatan, kekayaan, kreativiti dan dinamik kemajuan. Pembinaan bangsa tidak harus dibuat berdasarkan formula kawah besar peleburan atau melting pots. Jati diri setiap kelompok perlu ditempatkan dalam kerangka bingkai kesatuan sama.

Pada 21 Mac lalu, Hari Antarabangsa Penghapusan Diskriminasi Perkauman mengangkat Generasi Muda Bangkit Menangani Perkauman. Ia menunjukkan

betapa penting tanggungjawab perlu dipenuhi generasi muda untuk mencorak peradaban lebih baik masa akan datang.

Sebagai permulaan, generasi muda mesti menginsafi pembinaan bangsa Malaysia mempunyai sejarah tersendiri perlu digali untuk dicerna. Pemahaman terhadap sejarah dan mendalami latar belakang bangsa perlu diwujudkan bagi menyegarkan kembali nilai hidup bersama dalam budaya damai.

Bangsa Malaysia perlu terus relevan sebagai bangsa ramah dan inklusif, berasaskan nilai murni sejagat serta dibantu dalam kerangka Perlembagaan Persekutuan. Asas pembinaan bangsa Malaysia memerlukan seruan reformasi intelektual untuk menyemarakkan kefahaman mengenai negara bangsa dengan menyedari tanggungjawab serta peranan menyebarkan kebaikan dengan hikmah, bercitra kosmopolitan.

Reformasi ini memerlukan pengukuhan aspek idealisme dan aktivisme berorientasikan nilai serta etika. Bangsa Malaysia mampu menjadi model kenegaraan dengan mencetuskan perubahan secara inklusif terhadap permasalahan peradaban sejagat. Oleh itu, proses pemupukan dan kesatuan nilai berasaskan citra bangsa bermaruah, mandiri, berdaya maju serta dipandu dengan nilai perlu mula disemai dalam generasi muda.

#### **OP-ED #4**

#### **HERE ARE OUR PLANS FOR MALAYSIA: PROJEK #BANGSAMALAYSIA**

*Nathaniel Tan, Faisal Aziz, Adli Zakuan, Grazele Jenarun, Dr Khor Swee Kheng, Dr Siti Noor Munirah Ibrahim, and Tharma Pillai*

We agree with columnist Wong Chin Huat, who recently wrote on the need for the next leaders of our countries to have clear and concrete plans (<https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/581528>) for the future direction of the country.

Projek #BangsaMalaysia is working hard to produce a bottom-up, rakyat-driven roadmap for our nation's future. This is a long and involved process, and a detailed roadmap will take some time to complete.

That said, we were able to reach some consensus regarding some of the broader questions that were astutely posed by Wong:

“First, what is the overarching policy goal - flattening the curve or returning to normalcy? On one hand, can our hospitals not collapse without a full lockdown? On the other hand, can our economy survive an indefinite and real lockdown? What are the objective measures to decide what level of lockdown?”

“Third, how to speed up vaccination in both supply and administration? How to allow state governments, businesses and even charities to acquire more vaccines without competing with the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (NIP) for supply? Who should pay for their vaccination and for how much? What incentives in less control should be given to those who are fully vaccinated to encourage vaccination?”

Our guiding principle is the long-term health and safety of everyone in Malaysia. In pursuing this goal, here are our priorities:

Priority 1: Vaccinate as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. This can be done through a concerted all-of-society effort where every citizen and organisation plays a part. More vaccination will protect against Covid-19, variants and hospitalisations that strain our public hospitals.

Priority 2: Every possible step must be taken to ensure that hospitals and medical staff are able to operate in an effective, dignified and sustainable manner. This may require surge financing in the medium-term, and the government should borrow where necessary (this is acceptable because interest rates are very low). We will provide temporary solutions to contract health professionals (like doctors, pharmacists, dentists and nurses), while building the foundation for long-term durable solutions for the hiring process of the Health Ministry. Private healthcare must be brought into the fight against Covid-19 in a fair and equitable manner, given their resources and moral duty.

Priority 3: We must have smart, targeted and transparently decided MCOs. We will build a traffic-light MCO classification based on public health risk, like in Singapore or countries in the European Union. We will publish a list of which types of businesses are allowed to operate during which MCO stage. We will remove ad hoc decisions so that businesses can operate using a predictable decision-making framework.

Decisions regarding the levels of lockdown should be made objectively, based on data and science. Factors such as positivity rate, testing rate, infection rate and the total number of cases must all be taken into account as part of an overall algorithm. Different levels of MCO should apply to different states and different districts. All data regarding Covid-19 cases will be made transparently available at all times.

The second question raised by Wong Chin Huat: “Second, who amongst individuals and which amongst businesses should be prioritised in government aid, and by how much? How to make sure no one is starving? How to stop businesses from closing and workers from a layoff? How far should the government raise its debts to save households and businesses now?”

The guiding principle with regard to economic aid is that the most vulnerable should be protected the most. Food security and shelter must be made the top priority, and the government should welcome the help of NGOs and other civil society actors in identifying the most vulnerable populations and ensuring that

sufficient aid reaches them. One party alone will not be able to tackle a problem of this magnitude.

Aid to businesses for staff wages should be continued, and there must be a system to track unemployment due to Covid-19.

Malaysia's debt ratio is still within manageable levels. It is thus better to borrow a certain amount of money now, while we can, than have to borrow even more later when the economy is in a full crisis, and financing may become harder or more expensive to come by.

Wong concluded: "I want more than a change of PM or government parties. I want a real change in the political system."

Projek #BangsaMalaysia aims for the same.

It is time to reject a broken political system based on Very Important People, and replace it with a democratic movement that is based on Values, Impact and Policies.

There is no longer any point in looking towards the same old tired political players who have demonstrated their complete inability to set their priorities right. They do not hold the keys to our future. Power in our current system is overcentralised, and this in turn has poisoned our democratic culture and reduced all questions to the question of who the next prime minister will be.

The future lies instead with movements of Malaysians who believe in decentralised, collaborative consensus-building. It is only by believing in community-based decision making and the fact that there is more that unites us than divides us that we will succeed in building up a truly rakyat centric, representative and bottom-up democratic coalition for a brighter future.



(B) ANTI-CORRUPTION DIGITAL CAMPAIGN MATERIALS (POSTER)



(C) BANGSA MALAYSIA AGENDA DIGITAL CAMPAIGN MATERIALS (POSTER)

“ **Malaysia** merupakan sebuah negara **bertuah**, yang menjadi **kebanggaan bersama**. Lintasan sejarah global menunjukkan betapa pentingnya ‘Malaysia’ dalam **pemosisian strategik** peradaban dunia.

Inisiatif:       
Diskong oleh:    



**Bertuah kita sebagai warga!**  
**Ayuh bangunkan Bangsa Malaysia**  
**yang utuh, bersatu dan maju!**

“ **Kosmopolitan Malaysia** adalah suatu warisan zaman-berzaman yang mesti **dipertahankan** dengan sepenuh hati.

Inisiatif:       
Diskong oleh:    



**Tuhan Yang Maha Esa** telah menentukan takdir sejarah ini buat kita, yang **diamanahkan untuk mendiami dan memakmurkan bumi ‘Malaysia’ ini.**

**(C) DRAFT #2 BANGSA MALAYSIA REVIEW**

*Please refer to another pdf format document entitled "Bangsa Malaysia Review #2"*

