

GENERAL

Constitution needs to be amended to recognise Sabah, Sarawak's region status – Analyst

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KUCHING, Jan 14 (Bernama) -- Amendments to the Federal Constitution need to be done to recognise the region status of Sabah and Sarawak, said Universiti Putra Malaysia political science professor Datuk Dr Jayum Jawan.

He said this was because the announcement of the change of status from state to region without strong legal support does not carry significant meaning.

"What or how Sabah and Sarawak will be called, the Federal Constitution (for now) still sees, places and treats the two 'regions' as two of the 13 states in the Federation," he told Bernama when contacted today.

He was commenting on Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's statement yesterday that Sabah and Sarawak had been accorded the status of region and were no longer regarded as states within Malaysia.

In his policy speech at the 2022 UMNO general assembly, Ahmad Zahid said the relocation of the Indonesian capital to East Kalimantan made the Sabah and Sarawak regions more strategic, to be developed as new growth areas.

Commenting further, Jayum said that all the rights and privileges for Sabah and Sarawak are also already available in the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) and there are also those that have been agreed in the Federal Constitution.

"Everything has been outlined including the power of immigration. That's why Sarawak can deny the entry of those who are found to be a threat to security and harmony.

"In my opinion, what needs to be done now is for the power to be refined to adapt it to the passage of time because the previous targets (1960s) have changed," he said.

In addition, he said, special grants to Sabah and Sarawak are also clear under Article 112D of the Federal Constitution.

On Jan 4, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today's leaders need to be persistent in defending Malaysia's spirit in MA63 while doing their level best to honour the agreement which reflects the wisdom of the previous leadership.

He said the provision of special grants to Sabah and Sarawak according to Article 112D of the Federal Constitution should be reviewed once every five years so that the amount allocated will be more reasonable.

At the same time, Anwar said the Ministry of Finance had agreed for the implementation of any project with a cost below RM50 million in Sabah and Sarawak to be almost entirely decided by the state governments, subject to compliance with financial regulations.

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