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Crimes, criminals not exclusive to any group, community



By **Dzul kifli Abdul Razak** - December 24, 2020 @ 12:01am



Crimes and criminals are everywhere and are not the domain of one group or community. - NSTP/File pic/for illustration purposes only.

Recently, I received a commentary by an anonymous writer expressing disappointment over what the Malay-Muslims have become, purportedly bringing "the country to its knees".

The reference seems to be directed to those who have been caught red-handed in crimes bringing untold shame to the community. However, it is not always as clear-cut as presented, not without prejudices. Refer to the universal rule of thumb: one is considered innocent until proven guilty.

One needs to exercise caution so as not to throw the baby out with the bath water. Or as Malay wisdom has it: *Jangan kerana marahkan nyamuk, kelambu dibakar!* Yes, the Malays can be wise, too. The Malay heritage holds troves of wisdom if only we care to reach out.

There are also many wise Malay-Muslims amid the metaphorical irritating mosquitoes. In fact, we just mourned the passing of two who had shown immense wisdom.

One was a scholastic giant and public intellectual. Another was the nation's mother figure married to the best prime minister the country has seen. Both need no introduction because of their status as role models and inspirations.

Indeed, they were leaders of the community for the more discerning. Among the Malay-Muslims, there is no lack of intellectuals and academics who have made the country proud. The independence of this beloved country was made possible some 60 years ago by such personalities.

They were the unsung heroes who hardly made the headlines unlike the nuisance of today.

Working closely were the security forces who were almost all Malay-Muslims. They put their life on the line to protect every citizen and the sovereignty of the land, which used to be known as *Persekutuan Tanah Melayu*.

Again, there was practically no headline recognising who was who. Regardless, to the Malay-Muslim community, each unsung hero is regarded with immense pride until today.

Admittedly, from among them were *tali-barut* (read: traitors), some of whom were infamously named just like today; but their numbers do not represent nor colour the community in any way.

Thus, to generalise and admonish the majority because they prefer to keep silent is simply cruel. On the contrary, the majority have contributed, befitting another Malay adage about staying humble: *diam-diam ubi berisi*. And not to emulate *rasmi ayam, bertelur sebiji riuh sekampung*.

More numerous are the mother figures who have been nurturing the nation collectively. Again, as housewives and mothers — since the struggle for Merdeka and beyond, they worked extremely hard to protect and support the family.

Those from the rural areas and disadvantaged communities are too familiar with all these to recount them. Our mothers woke up early in the morning to prepare for the day and were the last to retire after all had settled down. This cycle goes on daily without a whine.

No wonder Muslims are always reminded that paradise lies under the feet of mothers. They taught us the decorum of living, and how to transact life with utmost dignity.

Some may fall short, but most prefer a life of moderation and humility. This is the ultimate testimony to how successful the community can be. No need to whine if a few fall through the cracks. Every community has similar stories to tell although some are more restrained than others.

Be that as it may, it does not involve only one ethnicity or religion. Most revealing is the case of 1MDB, as the "commentary" tends to focus on. Recall the ultra-illusive Jho Low, or the Goldman Sachs actors and other international personalities — including Hollywood celebrities — allegedly tainted. Similarly, for that matter, the more recent case of the Macau scams.

In short, crimes and criminals are everywhere and are not the domain of one group or community. Not even the Mafia or Yakuza — West or East. Bad apples are a fact of life, so too are good ones which are more plentiful, but somehow ignored.

What is obviously missed is that successful people prefer to focus on the positive aspects without degrading themselves.

Tepuk dada tanya selera — as the saying goes. Do not lay the blame on the whole community for one's failure in lacking the wisdom therein.

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The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Straits Times