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Nik Aziz-Fatwa

PAS LEADERS NEVER ISSUED FATWAS, SAYS NIK AZIZ

KOTA BAHARU, Feb 8 (Bernama) -- PAS leaders have all along never issued any fatwa or religious ruling, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said today

He said the party leaders had only been giving their opinion and advice on problems that arose, especially from the Islamic viewpoint.

"Umno must understand that fatwas can only be issued by a mufti or state Islamic affairs councils," he told reporters after receiving members of the Kelantan branch of the Ex-Policemen Association at his office.

Nik Aziz, who is PAS' spiritual adviser, was commenting on Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman's statement yesterday that PAS faced legal action if investigations showed that its leaders had been issuing fatwas that were against Islamic teachings.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said last week that Umno was gathering proof that PAS had been issuing such fatwas.

Nik Aziz claimed that Umno had been making all kinds of accusations against PAS after losing several seats to the opposition in the November general election.

"Umno must learn to accept defeats. PAS has often lost in general elections but we never made accusations against Umno," he said.

The menteri besar said the best way to overcome the problems between Umno and PAS was by holding a fresh election.

"At the election, both parties can campaign and explain their respective policies. Voters can then make a decision," he said.

In a statement later, Nik Aziz said PAS was prepared to hold discussions, but not open debates, with Umno over the alleged spread of lies which affected Muslim unity in the country.

He said PAS wanted discussions because they could be conducted harmoniously based on the truth.

Open debates, on the other hand, would see a clash of opinions presented in a vocal manner to the extent of forgoing the truth, he said in the statement read out by his press secretary Mohamed Fauzi Zakaria.

It was issued in response to a statement by Special Affairs Department director-general Datuk Zainal Abidin Abdul Kadir that he was prepared to debate with any opposition leader including Nik Aziz on the alleged spread of lies.

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