

PAS call for members to join Taliban fight slammed

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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno and other parties have criticised PAS for encouraging its members to fight alongside Taliban forces against the United States and its allies in Afghanistan.

PAS members should instead support Malaysian move to find a peaceful solution and to avert any more acts of terrorism in the world, they said.

PAS, however, said there was no directive for its members to take up arms in Afghanistan although it wanted them to protest against the US-led attacks.

In Langkawi, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Malaysians should not meddle in Afghanistan's domestic affairs by trying to drum up support to launch a

jihad in that country.

"There should be a proper international forum, such as the UN, to decide what should be done to prevent the increase of hostilities instead of making decisions on emotional responses," the deputy prime minister said.

"I've asked our envoys to seek the views of other governments and get their support to attend the proposed international meeting to end terrorism," he said after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Monamad.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said the Sept 11 attacks against the New York World Trade Centre and the Pentagon had affected the world, including Malaysia.

Malaysia was watching the situation in Afghanistan closely, he said, adding that there was no need for Malaysians to be involved directly in the conflict.

Umno information chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said Umno was of the opinion that it was better for PAS to focus its energy together with Umno and the Government, towards the socio-economic progress of Muslims in the country, particularly in Kelantan and Terengganu.

Umno Youth assistant secretary Zuklifli Alwi questioned the wisdom of PAS urging its members to go to Afghanistan at this time.

"Puteri Umno chief Azalina Othman said: "Our main concern should be for the Afghan refugees."