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Wan Azizah: No to secular front

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Parti Keadilan Nasional president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail today reiterated that the party has no intention of leaving the opposition front and joining the DAP to form a secular front.

Dr Wan Azizah said Keadilan could not be making decisions without consulting the other members in the coalition.

"Anyway, there is no formal invitation to us. We cannot simply abandon the coalition. All the while, we have been working closely with the other members."

Dr Wan Azizah said this when asked on a proposal by DAP president Lim Kit Siang to establish a secular front to take on the BN government in the coming election.

DAP left the opposition front on Sept 22 citing Pas' stand on the Islamic State issue for its departure.

Lim who raised the matter during a talk at the London School of Economics, said the new front should be one which will defend a secular Malaysia and oppose any attempt of turning the country into an Islamic state.

He also claimed that Dr Mahathir would "exploit" these factors to the detriment of the Opposition.

"It is up to Keadilan, PRM and other political forces in the country to decide if they want to join the DAP to protect and promote a democratic, secular, multi-religious, tolerant and progressive Malaysia, with Islam as the official religion," Lim had said.

When contacted, Lim claimed he had never suggested that Keadilan and PRM break off from Pas and join the proposed secular front.

Lim, in a statement today, said the secular front proposed was never meant to be anti any political party, not Pas nor Umno.

"If Pas or Umno were prepared to defend and uphold the fundamental constitutional principle and nation-building of the country as a secular state with Islam as the official religion, there is nothing to stop them from being such a secular front.

"As I said last week, I was not optimistic about the response to my London speech on a secular front, especially as DAP was not able to get the support of Keadilan and PRM in BA to defend and uphold a secular Malaysia.

"But such political differences do not mean that politics should degenerate into personal attacks or character assassination - as accusing me, for instance, of suddenly becoming an agent of the Barisan Nasional," he said.

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