

# Fadzil's participation in forum was right, say Pas leaders

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KUALA LUMPUR, M. Pas leaders are happy with their participation in the forum on Palestine, where party president Datuk Fadzil Noor and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad shared the platform to speak on the issue.

Pas information chief Azizan Abdul Razak said Fadzil was right in staying till the end of the event and he should have signed the joint declaration on Palestine.

Azizan was commenting on a column in the Pas party organ, *Harakah*, which criticised Fadzil and Pas leaders for taking part in the event which it said had deviated from its purpose of showing unity for Palestine.

The May 8 forum, organised by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and the Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (Abim), was attended by leaders and members of Pas, Umno, other political parties and the public.

The column in the English section of *Harakah* also alleged that Dr Mahathir was trying to divide Muslim unity on the Palestinian issue ahead of his visit to meet US President George W. Bush.

It said Fadzil and Pas leaders should have walked out of the hall when they realised that Dr Mahathir was trying to break Muslim solidarity with Palestine in his speech.

Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said it was unbecoming of the article to belittle an event which was to forge Malaysian solidarity on a very serious issue.

"Sometimes *Harakah* does not reflect the mainstream thinking of Pas leaders ... the fact that Datuk Fadzil spoke freely was very respectable. Both leaders did exceedingly well," said Muhyiddin.

"The lecture was organised by non-political organisations and it was non-political."

Abim president Ahmad Azam Abdul Rahman did not believe the forum deviated from its original purpose.

"The feedback we received from the public at large showed that we were successful at going beyond narrow political interests to reaching an understanding on a common agenda," he said.

On whether the lecture was aimed at Malay unity rather than Palestinian solidarity, he said it was successful at achieving Malay unity on the Palestinian issue.

Pas central working committee member Dr Hatta Ramli said some of its members felt it was a precursor to holding Malay unity talks, which was not part of Pas' intentions for participating in the event.