

Utusan moots ulama wing for Umno
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The time has come for Umno to step up to the plate and establish an ulama wing to take over from PAS in upholding the tenets of Islam, says a senior editor of Malay daily Utusan Malaysia.

In today's edition of the Umno-owned publication, Zaini Hassan said the party should prepare itself to receive PAS followers among its ranks, with a mass exodus expected following PAS' "abandonment" of its long-held struggle to make Malaysia an Islamic state.

Zaini wrote that his ulama wing proposal for Umno would be a natural progression from the party's young ulama secretariat (Ilmu), which currently sits under the religious bureau.

"We want the secretariat to be upgraded into a wing that has an ulama chief, vice-chief and an exco so that it can organise and mobilise kesukarelaan dakwah (missionary work) nationwide," the deputy group editor-in-chief said in his column Cuit.

Zaini said Malay youths were now keen on learning more about their faith, leaving the path open for the proposed ulama wing to intensify its missionary work in mosques and suraus across the country.

Accusing PAS of being a "hypocrite", he said the Islamist party has now chosen to join forces with DAP, which he described as decidedly anti-Islamic.

'PAS leadership loses direction'

Zaini said PAS has proven its impotence in dealing with the now infamous "over my dead body" statement made by DAP chairperson Karpal Singh in opposition to PAS' earlier plans to instal an Islamic state and Hudud law in Malaysia.

"Now they give in too much and are hoping for help from DAP... Karpal to PAS is a kapal (ship) that can help them to achieve their political ambitions," he said.

Zaini claimed that many PAS members were now disappointed with the party's loss of direction, after the leadership was largely taken over by the non-ulama faction who are jumud dan taksub or narrow-minded fanatics.

Zaini went on to lump ousted deputy president Nasharudin Mat Isa among the disgruntled members, saying the latter was axed for allegedly taking part in a group of PAS leaders that pushed for cooperation with Umno.

"We know ustaz Nash has the integrity to see through the unity of Muslims, but his intentions were destroyed by the greedy within his own party.

"Allah SWT has opened the way for Umno, so take that opportunity," he said.