

PAS accuses Najib, Nazri of insulting Parliament
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PAS today accused top BN leaders of insulting Parliament with their flippant attitude toward the recently announced select committee on electoral reform.

"Both Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and de facto Law Minister Nazri Aziz have insulted the august House," PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar said.

Najib was being flippant toward the committee, he said, by declaring that the government was not bound to wait for the committee to complete its duties prior to the next general election, and had blatantly insulted Parliament with this statement.

"If they form the committee, which will be a part of Parliament, they should follow through out of respect for the parliamentary process. Or else, why go through the effort at all?" Mahfuz (left) said at a press conference at the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Mahfuz also questioned the timing of the PM's statement which came after an Umno supreme council meeting.

"Why? Is it because he is being pressured to reverse his stand by elements opposing him in Umno?"

"Is early polls his gambit? An all or nothing ruse to fight pressure from those asking him to step down? If I go, we all go?" queried the Pokok Sena MP.

'Nazri pre-empted Parliament'

He also said that Nazri, in his statement defining the make-up of the committee and demanding that a minister head the body had pre-empted the privilege and right of Parliament to define the scope and form of any select committee.

"Only Parliament can and should decide on this" Mahfuz said.

But above and beyond respect for Parliament, Mahfuz argued, BN ministers should treat matters related to electoral reform more seriously as the issue is close to the heart of the rakyat.

"Electoral reform is not only for Parliament but also for the rakyat," he stressed, echoing similar calls for a royal inquiry into the matter so as to enable civil society and NGOs to be included as well, instead of just MPs.

"Even former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamed agreed and the Election Commission (EC) admitted that all is not well with our elections," added Mahfuz.

He also called on Najib and BN to stop using the select committee as mere window dressing to "lessen the political temperature" that was causing the ruling coalition to sweat.

"They shouldn't use the select committee for political gains. This adds to the insult to Parliament," he said.

'Kita won't derail Pakatan'

Mahfuz was resonding to Najib's sudden commitment about-turn on the recently announced select committee on electoral reform and his unwillingness to guarantee, as Pakatan demanded, that the committee be allowed to finish its job before the next GE is called.

PAS sees the futility of the committee if the general election comes before the reforms are put in place,

but it will still wait and see if Najib is willing to give any assurances on the matter.

Quizzed about the decision by fledgling political party Kita to contest in Kelantan and Selangor, Mahfuz said it was the party's "democratic right to contest as many seats as it wants".

However he warned Kita, led by former federal minister former Pakatan leader Zaid Ibrahim (right) to be sure of its political aims - or else it would be stamped "sabotuer" in the minds of the rakyat.

"When you come in to contest without any real strength or chance of winning, you give the impression to the rakyat that you are trying to derail Pakatan support," Mahfuz warned.

However, he dismissed Kita as being of no real consequence to Pakatan's chances in the coming election as it was a small party with "no real grassroots".

Kita announced yesterday that it would be contesting in seats in Kelantan and Selangor in the coming polls.

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