

**Observers pessimistic of PAS march to Putrajaya**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**February 18, 2012**  
**Aidila Razak**

Attend a Pakatan Rakyat rally and one cannot help but think that a victory in the next general election is a sure thing.

But for about 30 observers who attended the Kumpulan Aktivistik Media Independen roundtable discussion on PAS' chances in the next general election, the picture seems a little more grim.

Abdul Rahman Othman According to PAS card-carrying member Abdul Rahman Othman, (with mike in photo) for Pakatan to win, PAS needs to win 60 of the 80 parliamentary seats it is vying for.

"Today PAS has 22... and we may lose more, bringing that number down to 18 with some casualties in Kedah and Terengganu," he observed at the Kuala Lumpur event.

His view was shared by political scientist and retired UKM lecturer Ghazali Mayudin, who said that Pakatan has lost out to BN's consistent campaigning to win over the grassroots.

"Things like Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia may be political bribery, but it really touches the rakyat who will translate this into votes.

"I don't see what can be done in such a short time to return PAS and Pakatan to the original roadmap. The roadmap no longer leads to Putrajaya, not when BN is moving so aggressively," he said.

#### PAS at the crossroads

Ghazali said that it has even come to a point where Pakatan should really focus on maintaining the states they have won, rather than making a big play to take over the nation.

While he personally believes that a change of government would bring on long-term benefits to the rakyat beyond one-off measures like BR1M, he said PAS' current approach is not denting BN's headway.

"If it is about corruption and abuse of power, BN would have fallen long ago. In other countries it may be so, but Malaysians are different," he said.

Ghazali added that public perception, thanks to the mainstream media, is a Pakatan that is constantly at each other's throats, and a PAS which cannot decide its future direction.

"PAS is in a 'ding-dong' situation, between the professionals and the religious conservatives. Its constitution and history are conservative but it now tries to portray a progressive image to suit new politics," he observed.

This, he said, was a sound approach which may not have immediate pay off in the next election but in future polls.

"In the context of new politics... PAS needs to be led by professionals to present a fresh image that inspires confidence in both Malays and non-Malays," he said, questioning also the role of the ulama council in the party.

Who will protect Malays when Umno is gone?

Among PAS' biggest challenge, said party deputy president Mohamad Sabu who was also present today,

was reassuring Malays who make up the majority of PAS-vied constituencies.

"I fear that this means PAS and Umno will say the same thing. Umno asks the Malays, if we lose who will protect you? This doctrine works because politics is about perception," he said.

He added that Malays would rather have a corrupt leader as long as he is Malay and Muslim.

"DAP and PSM could be very good but they're not Muslim. We Malays could be awful but we're Muslims... this is not just among the rural settlers but the urban educated middle class."

Mohamad Sabu (right) added that while Hasan Ali's expulsion from PAS has not created rifts in the party, the latter's nationwide campaign will lend weight to "Umno's doctrine" that Pakatan cannot protect Malays.

"A third of TV3's national news segment is dedicated to Hasan Ali, and this has an impact," he said.

Malay history researcher and mathematician Mohd Alinor Abdul Kadir said this may be overcome by using the ceramah circuit to remind Malays of their great history, so that they can be confident of their abilities.

Stop bickering over petty things

But while this approach is good for the long-run, said political analyst Mohd Sayuti Omar, it is not something that could aid PAS in the few months before the next general election.

"What is important is not to bicker about petty things like Valentine's Day. It may be important in terms of religion but not in politics.

"Since you chose a change through electoral politics, issues like these should not be raised. The important thing is for you to gain power," he said.

Agreeing on the issue, Anything But Umno (ABU) movement coordinator Edy Noor Redhuan said it is not just a question of gaining power for the sake of it, but for the sake of expanding the Islamic movement.

He also suggested that the focus be placed on highlighting Umno's "betrayal of Malays" in a move to reassure the community that they do not need to be protected by Umno.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd  
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/189552>