

Azizan defies PAS leadership, appoints 8 exco members
MalaysiaKini.com
February 28, 2012
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Kedah Menteri Besar Azizan Abdul Razak has appointed eight state executive councillors, two fewer than the previous 10, at today's swearing in ceremony at the state palace.

The eight exco members were Amiruddin Hamzah, Mohamed Taulan Mat Rasul, Dr Hamdan Mohamed Khalib, Lim Soo Nee, Abd Ghani Ahmad, Tan Joon Long @ Tan Chow Kang, Siti Ashah Ghazali and S Manikumar, who had received the offer of reappointment.

Azizan (left) said the portfolios for the two former exco members - Phahrolrazi Zawawi and Ismail Salleh - will be taken over by others.

"We will arrange it after we have appointed another two members for the state exco position.

At a press conference later, Azizan denied there was any interference from the PAS central committee over his decision to drop the two exco members from his state cabinet.

Azizan said the recent statement by PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali that the party wanted him to appoint 10 instead of eight state exco members was probably the latter's "own opinion".

Mustafa had then said the 10 have to be retained as they are "important for the state's administration".

He added that perhaps the newspapers had been wrong in reporting Mustafa's statement as the PAS central leadership had not met to decide such a thing.

'No interference'

When asked how he felt about the intervention from party's top leaders, Azizan said he was appointed by them to lead Kedah.

"Kedah does not solely belong to me. I have to eventually abide by the decision of the PAS central leadership," he told reporters.

"What is important is that this state is administered properly and I have to ensure that we continue to rule," he added.

When asked if his decision would undermine the party's reputation, Azizan said it was up to the people to judge.

Besides, the issue concerning state exco members is separate from party matters, he added.

He added that whatever decision he made, he would inform PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang and Mustafa.

He stressed it was then up to the party leadership to "respect or not" the decisions he had made regarding Kedah.

"Whether they respect my decision or not, it is up to them. I just do my job. I will do it to the best of my ability," he said.

"They (central leadership) have their own ideas, we have our own. We will then meet to discuss which is the best, and then we will choose the best decision that is beneficial to the party and the state. That is the

concept of syura (discussion in Islam),” he added.

On the fate of the two former exco members who did not get reappointed, Azizan said there is a possibility that they may be asked to return to their posts.

“But that is a possibility. We have not decided yet,” he added, saying that he has yet to speak to the duo as they are on leave until next month.

On whether his ability to go through with his decision on the appointment of eight state exco members meant a victory for his leadership in Kedah, Azizan said, “For me, it is not about winning or losing... only in elections, is there winning or losing”.

Azizan faced heavy criticisms and calls for him to step down for not reappointing the two exco members who are state deputy commissioners I and II.

Azizan is no stranger to controversy, having openly challenged Pakatan Rakyat's policies.

Pakatan leaders were dismayed by his latest antics in officially supporting the 1971 Universities and University Colleges Act.

The opposition have been championing the abolishment of the restrictive law for decades.

'We rule and administer together'

Meanwhile, Azizan was asked if he no longer listens to the advice of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim when making decisions that affect Pakatan or the state administration.

Anwar, the Permatang Pauh MP, is often described as the de facto leader of Pakatan, as he is the coalition's choice for prime minister if it takes over Putrajaya in the coming polls.

Azizan merely replied, “We are not the Barisan Nasional. We rule and administer together.

“Every party has its own leaders. In PAS, our head is Abdul Hadi, in PKR it is Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, and DAP it is Karpal Singh or Lim Guan Eng.

“The trio will sit on the presidents' council and make decisions for Pakatan. For example, during the general election, it is our president who endorses our candidacy,” he added.

As for the BN, he said, it is BN president and prime minister Najib Abdul Razak who approves the candidacy for all parties.

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