

Hindraf to field Uthayakumar for GE13

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By Nigel Aw

The Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) today named its de facto leader P Uthayakumar as its candidate for the next general election.

padang chetty klang hindraf 220411 When contacted, Uthayakumar said he will contest in two seats, namely the parliamentary seat of Kota Raja and the state seat of Sri Andalas in Selangor, which are currently both held by Pakatan Rakyat.

"If I win, I will be the first Hindraf candidate in Parliament and the Selangor state assembly, we are going on a platform of equal opportunity, upward mobility and the elimination of racism by the state and private sector," he said.

Uthayakumar was the key leader of Hindraf rally in 2007 and was subsequently detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for 514 days.

Kota Raja is presently held by PAS' Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud while Sri Andalas is held by PKR's Dr Xavier Jeyakumar.

Hindraf has no choice

While conceding that this may split Pakatan's votes, Uthayakumar said the movement had "no other choice" because the opposition coalition has refused to engage Hindraf despite its best efforts to negotiate for one-on-one contests.

hindraf klang rally 200512 "In the last general election we did not ask for any seats. We gave our whole hearted support to Pakatan. But after they won in Selangor, they have failed to address the problems faced by the Indian poor," he said.

An example, he claimed, 282 acres of land in the state meant for places of worship was given to Chinese temples when the Hindu community were much more in need of them.

"If I am in the state assembly then I can bring issues such as this to a higher level," he said.

He added that when Hindraf advocated for the Indian poor, Pakatan had often tried to label them as racist, "but it doesn't matter," he said.

The announcement today was made before supporters at an event in Klang. Hindraf is expected to announce candidates for the Kelana Jaya and Kuala Selangor parliament seats as well as the Bukit Melawati, Ijok and Seri Setia state assembly seats, all in Selangor.

At a national level, the party aims to contest 7 parliamentary seats and 14 state seats in total.

"This is just a small number of seats we are asking from Pakatan. Even MIC contests in nine parliamentary seats and 19 state seats," he said.

'Not voting is an option'

Uthayakumar said the movement is calling on the Indian community to back its candidates and where there is no Hindraf contesting, they should reject Umno but "not voting is an option".

"Last time we told them to vote for Pakatan but when Pakatan did not deliver, people held us responsible, we have to answer, so this time we are saying it's up to the community to decide," he said.

The event in Klang today was also the second invitation for opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim to come explain what Pakatan would do for the Indian community in its first 100 days if it captures Putrajaya.

"We are disappointed that Anwar did not turn up, he had an opportunity to explain the difficult issues faced by the Indian poor. For example, he supports a royal commission of inquiry in Sabah on MyKads, but what about the 450,000 Indians without MyKads?" said HRP information chief S Jayathas when contacted.

Anwar had turned down the first invitation and did not respond to the second, citing that the opposition coalition should champion its cause without going along racial lines.

"They are taking the easy way out. They are trying to label us as racist in order to silence us," said Jayathas.

The Human Rights Party, the political arm of Hindraf, is not a registered political party and its candidates are expected to contest as independents.

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