

Stop hudud spat, Karpal pleads to PAS

MalaysiaKini.com

Aug 12, 2012

By Susan Loone

Pakatan Rakyat must be feeling the heat over its on-going spat over PAS' insistence to pursue the implementation of hudud law should the coalition takes over Putrajaya in the 13th general election.

DAP's national chairperson Karpal Singh has pleaded for the on-going controversy over the implementation of Islamic jurisprudence between his party and PAS to be halted.

He urged PAS leaders to refrain from making statements regarding the issue, saying it was a clear contradiction to the current laws of the land, the federal constitution.

As to his comments on rejecting the law and opposing PAS' insistent on it, Karpal replied, "I only respond to those statements out of necessity, as what they say must be given a response."

Karpal has been labelled a "non-believer" for constantly rejecting the Islamic jurisprudence, which is part of the religion's system of belief.

The veteran lawyer had shot back, saying that PAS' insistence on the law reflected badly on the bona fides of what was decided at the PAS muktamar last year.

The issue of hudud, however, has been constantly raised by Pakatan Rakyat's rival, MCA, who accused of DAP being an 'eunuch' for not being able to stop PAS in its holy pursuit.

Serious opposition defeat

In 2001, ahead of the Sarawak state elections, the DAP had departed from the loosely knitted Barisan Alternatif - where it formerly partnered with PAS and Semangat 46, over the Islamic state issue.

The split lead to a serious defeat of the opposition parties in the 2004 general election.

Karpal was asked if he feared that PAS would one day join hands with Umno to implement the Islamic law, as the latter has also expressed similar views despite being political rivals.

The well-known lawyer said "anything is possible in politics", before adding that he would not respond to "speculations".

However, if Pakatan took over Putrajaya and PAS continues its insistence to implement the law, Karpal said "DAP's stand on the matter is consistent and we are very clear about it".

"We will take them (PAS) on in the best interests of the country," he added.

Meanwhile, Karpal said that even with a two-thirds majority, no party can declare the country an Islamic state.

He added that the basic structure and foundation of the country is a secular state and any amendments to the constitution are only "peripheral".

"Just like a tree which has its roots as the foundation, we cannot cut its roots. The word 'amendment' does not include changing the basic structure of the constitution," clarified Karpal.

"Just like we cannot ask that a monarchy be outlawed as that is the basic structure of our country, so it is with our parliamentary democracy," he explained further.

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