

## **Ini Kalilah or Lain Kalilah, as multiple fights teem in Sabah**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**April 20, 2013**

**By Aidila Razak**

At the Kota Kinabalu nomination centre this morning, there was one battlecry which resonated with most of those present.

Whether carrying PKR, DAP, Star or SAPP flags, most party supporters cried out "Ini Kalilah!" All of them think that a regime change in Sabah is in the air.

But as the Election Commission slowly announces the official candidates list for the polls, the question asked in the coffee shops of Kota Kinabalu is this - "Ini Kalilah atau Lain Kalilah?" (This Is The Time, or Maybe Next Time?)

As expected, discord among the four opposition quarters has forced multi-cornered fights in most of the seats in Sabah, including parliamentary ones crucial for a change of government at federal level.

There are only two straight fights in Sabah this time around - Sandakan: VK Liew (BN) vs Stephen Wong (DAP); and Tanjong Batu: Hamisa Samat (BN) vs Fatmawaty Mohd Yusuf (PAS).

Kalabakan, the parliamentary seat where Tanjong Batu is located, sees a seven-cornered fight with incumbent Abdul Ghapur Salleh, who was returned unopposed in 2008, facing PAS, SAPP and three Independent candidates.

Setting the record this year is Sulabayan, a state constituency in the parliamentary constituency of Semporna where a grand total of seven candidates are standing.

Defending the seat for BN is Jaujan Sambakong, once aide to incumbent Semporna MP Mohd Shafie Afdal.

He is up against PKR's Hermeny Murgal, MUPP's Hasaman Safaran and a whopping three Independent candidates.

Friction within Semporna Umno - evident by a demonstration by a couple of hundred Umno members in Bugaya this week - had initially given hope for opposition inroads.

But a fractious race is more likely to split the opposition vote in favour of Jaujan and Shafie.

The same story could be told about Kota Belud, where locals claim to be less than happy with incumbent candidate Abdul Rahman Dahlan (left).

Abdul Rahman, who is Umno Sabah secretary, won by a slim majority of about seven percent of votes in 2008 in a straight fight against PKR.

However, he is likely to retain his seat as those who may want to vote against him will have four other candidates to choose from.

They are PKR youngster Issnaraissah Munirah Majilid, Star's Jalumin Bugayoh and an Independent candidate.

Six candidates in Ranau

Unhappiness within Tuaran PKR has also forced a four-cornered fight in Tuaran.

One of the aspirants there is sidelined PKR Tuaran chief Ansari Abdullah's (right) daughter Erveana, an up and coming youth leader in the party there.

Neither father or daughter made it to PKR's candidates list, which included newcomers from new Pakatan Rakyat ally PPPS and APS.

APS chief Wilfred Bumburing, who defected from Upko, will stand in Tuaran, against BN's Wilfred Madius Tangau.

Bumburing is already treading on thin ice, having rubbed locals the wrong way after defecting from PBS to Upko to now become Pakatan-friendly.

"Umno members are obviously not happy with him, and neither are PKR members. So who's left to vote for him?" a PKR source asked.

A multi-cornered fight does not deliver him extra favours.

In Ranau, state constituency Kundasang will be the battleground for six people from Star, PKR, SAPP, BN and two Independents.

It is unclear if the Independent candidates are unhappy members of PKR, but sources claim that PKR's Ranau candidate Jonathan Yasin is unlikely to get much help from those greenhorns contesting for the party in state seats under Ranau.

In 2008, the opposition received more votes compared to the BN in eight seats but

lost the seats to BN through multi-cornered fights.

Most of these seats were then contested by only two opposition candidates.

With a total of 32 seats now being vied for by all four opposition groups, perhaps a BN banner seen on Jalan Tun Fuad Stephen says it all: "Anda berada di wilayah BN" (You are now in BN territory).

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/227469>