

Nik Aziz launches Qaradawi letter endorsing Anwar as PM

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KUALA LUMPUR PAS spiritual adviser Nik Aziz Nik Mat today launched a Pakatan Rakyat campaign pamphlet carrying an open letter from prominent international Sunni cleric Yusuf Qaradawi, endorsing opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim as candidate for prime minister.

Nik Aziz (in white robe) launched the pamphlet at the Pantai Permai people's housing project in Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur.

Accompanying him was PKR's Lembah Pantai incumbent Nurul Izzah Anwar, who is facing a tough battle to defend her seat against her challenger from BN, caretaker Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Minister Raja Nong Chik Zainal Abidin.

Nik Aziz's launch of the letter in the heart of the low-income Malay area is a clear attempt to shore up Malay Muslim support for the embattled giant-killer Nurul, who had wrested the seat from former minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil in her maiden political appearance in GE12.

Previously, PKR big guns Anwar and party president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail have also spoke at ceramah and make walkabouts in Lembah Pantai to shore up support for their daughter Nurul (centre in photo).

The letter dated March 2 this year was addressed to the people of Malaysia.

Qaradawi heads the International Union for Muslim Scholars, the highest body representing Islamic ulama worldwide.

"I personally feel that Anwar, based on his history, experience, wisdom, struggle and perseverance from his youth till today, and the affection he commands from Malaysians, including the Malays and the Chinese, makes him qualified and most suited to head the government and hold the office of prime minister and lead the people of Malaysia," the Muslim scholar says in his letter.

Anwar is well-known to be a close confidante of the cleric as well as various influential figures in the Islamic world.

In his letter, Qaradawi also urged Malaysians to reject those who practised divisiveness and used subterfuge to victimise Anwar, and to unite as one in a

coalition that encourages unity.

He expressed the support of the ulama as well as the full support of brotherhood they represent in Arab and non-Arab countries to a united Malaysia.

'Vote for a gov't that implements Islamic teachings'

In a short ceramah to the hundreds of Pakatan supporters who attended the launch, Nik Aziz reminded the mainly Malay Muslim crowd to "vote for a government that can and will implement Islamic teachings".

He said that this was in contrast to the present government which had elected to follow the Western secular model by separating faith and state.

"They promote prayers the Islamic way, fast the Islamic way, perform the haj the Islamic way, but in governing the country, they follow the Western way."

The present government, he said, was also too focused on nationalistic fervour, which is contrary to Islam's more egalitarian outlook.

The launch of the document by Nik Aziz is symbolic, not only as a show of international support for Anwar and to cement their battle against the BN, but as a reminder to certain people in PAS itself, who had spoken of alternate candidates for PM should Pakatan win Putrajaya.

The PAS stand, however, is in line with Pakatan's understanding that Anwar will be the PM if the coalition wins GE13.

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