

Johor DAP deputy chief retracts anti-PAS statement

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By Kuek Ser Kuang Keng

JOHOR Johor DAP deputy chief Norman Fernandez today retracted his earlier statement that non-Muslims should not vote for PAS because it wants to implement hudud.

Fernandez then went on to pledge to support the Islamic party. Norman (left in photo) told a press conference in Johor Bahru this afternoon that he made the decision after DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng and PAS president Hadi Awang issued a joint statement that hudud is not part of the joint Pakatan Rakyat's agenda.

"Hence it is only appropriate, and the right time now, for me to sincerely and openly retract the previous statement that does not support PAS."

The lawyer stressed that he was not under any pressure, or forced, to make the retraction.

PAS leaders, including vice-president Salahuddin Ayub and state deputy commissioner Mazlan Aliman, were also present at the press conference, together with state DAP chief Dr Boo Cheng Hau.

In a blog posting published last Saturday, Fernandez called on voters to reject PAS in Johor if they do not wish to risk their future.

PAS, said Fernandez, would do anything to gain power, due to the party's "unilateral stand and the deep reluctance to be a true partner in Pakatan Rakyat".

"(PAS') unwillingness to subscribe to its ideals, let alone agree and accept the common manifesto of Pakatan, must be enough to convince non-Muslims of the grave danger of risking their votes for PAS," he had written.

Joint statement by Lim and Hadi

On Monday, Lim and Hadi said in a joint statement that the cooperation in Pakatan Rakyat is based on our common manifesto, but both PAS and DAP also recognise their right to practise their respective ideologies.

Fernandez also said the both party chiefs also agreed that any issue pertaining to

the Islamic criminal laws will only be answered by the duo.

NONESatisfied with the commitment made by the duo, he decided to withdraw the previous statement, Fernandez explained.

“Since the commitment has been given, people should support Pakatan Rakyat.”

Asked about banners quoting his previous statement which had been put up in the Gelang Patah constituency, which is being contested by DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang and BN state chief Abdul Ghani Othman, Fernandez said he believes the banners will only strengthen the support for Pakatan Rakyat.

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