

## **We're not begging to join Pakatan, says PSM chief**

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**By Ram Anand**

INTERVIEW Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) secretary-general S Arutchelvan said that his party is not "kneeling" to join Pakatan Rakyat despite having applied to be a member of the opposition coalition before last month's general election.

When asked to comment on the perception that PSM appears to be eager to join Pakatan but the same enthusiasm seems lacking from the federal opposition, Arutchelvan said:

PSM secretary-general S Arutchelvan at bar council forum 1 "We have been around since 1998, Pakatan only existed after the 2008 elections. However every congress we have had post-2008, our members wanted us to join Pakatan," he said during an interview with Malaysiakini on Wednesday.

He added there were many Pakatan leaders who had asked PSM to join Pakatan as they were fighting for the same cause - to oust BN from Putrajaya.

"The question that was raised by Pakatan grassroots was whether PSM was too arrogant, if we were sincere to the cause because we are not officially part of the pact.

"The people wanted to see a formidable team take on BN in the GE. We had asked Pakatan to evaluate all these points in our application letter. We are still fine with joining the pact or just maintaining political cooperation.

"But we are not kneeling down to join Pakatan. We have enough principles on our own," he added.

### Mixed signals

Arutchelvan conceded that given the current Pakatan leadership is sending mixed signals on accepting PSM as part of the coalition, its members are now split between maintaining cooperation with Pakatan or to form a third force.

"That will be the main issue that will be discussed in our national congress at the end of this month. We have two groups of supporters now. One wants to continue working with Pakatan, while the other wants us be a third force. We will listen to our members," he said.

NONEThe PSM national congress takes place in Cameron Highlands from June 28-30.

Arutchelvan also stressed that many Pakatan's policies, which are included in the opposition coalition's manifesto, came from PSM's early struggles.

"Issues such as free education and minimum wage, we have brought them up more than five years ago. Pakatan later brought them into its manifesto," he said.

However, Arutchelvan said that PSM is more than happy with Pakatan's decision to adopt these policies.

"We are happy that it did, but we also have our own programmes as well regarding these policies," he said.

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