

PAS livid over proposal to revoke laureate title
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The suggestion that A Samad Said's national laureate title be revoked following his arrest over the flying of the Sang Saka Malaya flag is an "extreme" measure, said PAS.

pas muktamar 130610 tuan ibrahim tuan man Party information chief Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man (left) said even by saying the title can be reviewed, Culture and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek dealt the laureate a "great insult".

"Can the government deny that Pak Samad (as he is fondly known) had enriched and raised the status of Malay literature simply because his struggle today is seen as not 'government-friendly'?"

"His leadership and courage to fight against electoral fraud through his involvement in Bersih, even in his advanced age, is an inspiration to Malaysians and the younger generation," he said.

Tuan Ibrahim added that in the eyes of the people, Samad was not only a laureate but a "hero who defended his principles, even if it went against the government".

He said the move to arrest for every little perceived fault has turned Malaysia into a "police state", when other ways like dialogue could have better served to clarify the situation.

'Many different flags flown in various events'

In any case, the PAS leader said, there was nothing wrong with flying of a flag that was not the national flag and that many different flags were flown in various events.

Samad was arrested under the Sedition Act 1948 at 12.30am on Wednesday. He was released several hours after being questioned.

In a video posted online, Samad is shown reading a poem during the Merdeka eve celebration at Dataran Merdeka last Friday next to a woman holding the Sang Saka flag, before the flag was grabbed by an angry man.

The flag, also known as the 'Bendera Rakyat' was first raised in 1947 by leftist

independence group Putera-AMCJA.

NONEAhmad Shabery (right) was yesterday reported as saying that it was up to the panel who awarded him the national laureate title to decide whether the title should be revoked.

However, he was quoted by Bernama as saying that Samad's actions could lower public perception of national laureates.

Meanwhile, Federal Territory PAS Youth information chief Yusapiza Yaacob said that even the mere suggestion that the title should be reviewed is "unfair" and "cruel".

He added that if a laureate's title can be revoked after falling afoul with the government, then the same should happen to the titles held by leaders who are corrupt.

"What should happen to all awards given to Umno/BN leaders who are corrupt? The wholesale betrayal of the people's trust - this is the real threat to national safety.

"They are the ones who should be punished, not an elderly man who read out a poem," he said, adding that the action against Samad shows that Malaysians have no freedom of choice and expression.

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