

**Work for Obama if you're so smart, Umno ustaz fumes**  
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Furious with the criticism over his article, Umno Ulama Muda secretariat chairperson Fathul Bari Mat Jahaya has launched a broadside against his critics.

In a video explanation, he said that his article 'Harga barang ditetapkan Allah', which among others, suggested that the price of goods was decided by Allah, was judged too "literally".

fathul bari 110913He also called on his critics to work as the economic advisers for US President Barack Obama or Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Fathul Bari (right) said his article was actually about the sixth tenet of the Islamic faith, that is the belief in fate and destiny.

Labelling his online critics as "lebai ekonomi keyboard" (keyboard economic experts), he said that by criticising his article, they were trying to act smarter than Prophet Muhammad.

This was because he had based his article on a hadith, in which the prophet said that he cannot control prices, which were then escalating, and that only God could determine such things.

"None of them (the critics) were constructive in their criticism, but were driven by emotions," said Fathul Bari in the video uploaded by Abu Aqif Studio yesterday.

He said that nowhere in his article did he state that this means that mankind should simply be fatalistic, as suggested by his critics.

He also slammed Anwar Ibrahim for now criticising the move to cut fuel subsidy, saying that when the opposition leader was finance minister, he too, cut subsidy by 10 sen.

Subsidies were paid by public funds, he added, and those who were always protesting against alleged abuse of public funds should support the subsidy cuts.

"Those who protest against abuse of public funds should fight against abuse of the subsidy to benefit the rich, smugglers and foreigners. But where are these protesters?" he asked.

'Forbidden to blame political parties'

Fathul Bari in a column in Sinar Harian last Sunday said that the hadith he had quoted taught Muslims not to blame traders, government or voters for their woes.

"Islam forbids its followers from saying things like 'if the other party is in power, surely prices will not go up', as this only opens the doors for the devil to come in and ruin the followers' faith.

"Who knows better than Allah?... As such Islam teaches us to face difficult situations by saying 'Allah has determined this and He will do as he wills'," he had written in the column.

This invited criticism from former Perlis mufti Asri Zainul Abidin who asked on Twitter: "Did Allah cut the fuel subsidy? Religious scholars can be very clever when it comes to defending something."

Asri later elaborated on his blog that the hadith cited by Fathul Bari should be seen in context, whereby it was said at a time when price control would have victimised traders.

"But times change, and so do traders' attitudes and market situations. If price control policy does not exist today, it is the consumers who may be victimised," he said.

He added that as such, Islamic historians agreed that price control was allowed as long as it is fair to both consumers and traders.

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