

PKR: Umno can learn from Sarawak on tolerance

MalaysiaKini.com

Jan 12, 2014

PKR blames the racial and religious problems in Malaysia especially in the peninsula, on Umno's political dominance for the past 50 years, said its director of strategy director Rafizi Ramli.

"The racial and religious problems we have today are a result of Umno's doings over the past 50 years," he said at a media conference.

Sarawak, he said, could teach Umno a thing or two on religious tolerance and racial harmony.

His colleague Elizabeth Wong (right), a Selangor executive councilor, added that Umno had lost "everything" in Selangor and thus needs to resort to racial and religious issues to win the state back.

Wong, who is in charge of Selangor's tourism, consumer affairs and environment committee, said that the state government had discussed with Selangor Islamic Authority (Jais) for the return of the seized Malay and Iban versions of the Bible.

"Hopefully the Bible should be returned to the Bible Society Malaysia by next week," she said.

Rafizi, Wong and several senior leaders from PKR central leadership were in Kuching to conduct a workshop on election preparations for the coming state election.

Rafizi said that Pakatan had given its assurance that the coalition would abide by the federal constitution which ensures the freedom of religion in the country.

"This freedom will be further protected by the Kuching Declaration and the Common Platform Policy and the Buku Jingga.

"Unlike BN, we have written agreements in the Kuching Declaration and in our Common Platform Policy.

"We have a very clear distinction when it comes to religious freedom and this agreement is signed by the three parties," he said.

"While we respect the position of Islam as the official religion of the country, the position of the Malays and sultans, we at the same time also uphold the right of others to practise their own religions as guaranteed by the constitution," he said.

Role model

Praising Sarawak as a role model, Rafizi said the state's multi-racial and multi-religious people are living harmoniously.

"Sarawak is the only state without Umno, and the time is opportune for Sarawak to teach Umno about racial and religious tolerance.

"So in the coming state election, the focus will not only be about politics and election, it is more about people coming to Sarawak to learn and understand issues.

"What Umno is doing in peninsular Malaysia is a boost to us in Sarawak," he said, pointing out that PKR is the only party with a strong presence of all races.

On the coming state election, Rafizi expressed confidence that Pakatan will form the next state government as it has now devised a number of new strategies.

"PKR Sarawak plans to set up 1,000 divisions, branches and sub-branches, and by the time we go to the next election, we will have these new branches.

"Secondly, the organising of the workshops comes at an opportune time because in peninsular Malaysia we have these problems of races and religions.

"We will take this opportunity to bring as many as possible our leaders to help Sarawak and explain to them the problems in the peninsula.

"We need to learn from Sarawak as it is a role model for all the states in peninsular Malaysia," he said.

Rafizi said the third strategy is to prepare early and build up the election momentum, pointing out that the party needs to announce its candidates early so that there's ample time serve the people.

"Our strategy is to go beyond the post-Taib era. It means no more rhetoric and it will be more of a vision for Sarawak," he said.

Abdul Taib Mahmud has been chief minister for more than 30 years.

Sarawak PKR chief Baru Bian (right) said that the selection of candidates would be best if based on their key performance index.

"Feedback must come from divisions and branches as well as from non-governmental organisations, and then we will make our evaluations," he said.

"That is why we need to announce our potential candidates early so that everyone can judge them," said Baru, who is the Ba'Kelalan Assemblyperson.

"We are very serious in this coming election as we have learnt a great deal from previous elections," he added.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://beta.malaysiakini.com/news/251611>