

Why PAS is pushing hard for hudud
MalaysiaKini.com
May 2, 2014

ANALYSIS When Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom spoke in Parliament on March 27, not many would expect his statement would raise the hudud issue again and snowball to the extent that it may even split Pakatan Rakyat.

Since the formation of Pakatan in 2008, the issue has been emerged off and on a few times. But even in most intense debates in 2011, things were never as serious as now, when a few DAP top leaders have called on PAS to quit Pakatan, if did not back down on its theocratic goals.

According to Hansard of Parliament, parliamentarians from both sides had asked Jamil Khir (right) if the federal government would allow certain states to implement hudud.

The minister's reply was that "the federal government will be ready to work with any state government that is ready to implement hudud including Kelantan", as Umno Kelantan assemblypersons had supported the passing of Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code Enactment II to implement hudud in 1993.

He had then suggested that it is up to the non-government members of Parliament to table a private member's bill for that purpose.

In the storm that ensued from Jamil Khir's statement, DAP warned PAS not to fall into Umno's trap.

Commenting on this, head of PAS think tank, Dzulkefly Ahmad (left), conceded that while it may be a trap set by Umno to break up Pakatan, PAS must nevertheless take up the challenge and show its seriousness in pushing the hudud agenda.

"If we are not serious, then people will say PAS is only playing a sandiwara (putting on an act) and merely giving lip service to hudud. Also, Malays will be reinforced of the propaganda that PAS is saddled and controlled by DAP.

"So we have got to do it, we must have the political will to do it," said Dzulkefly, who is also a PAS central committee member.

However, he added that PAS should take up the challenge "in a smart way".

"We know their game plan, but when you are being challenged like that, you got to be smart and challenge back.

“We do it because it is a principle. We are also telling our Pakatan partners they must also understand our political predicament.

“Umno is telling the kampung folks that PAS is now controlled by DAP. That message had damaged us seriously in the last election. Because of that, when we face a challenge like this, you cannot expect us to back off even if you threaten us with a split.”

By taking the hudud agenda head-on, Dzulkefly said it will allow PAS to have the moral high ground in facing its arch rival Umno.

However, he stressed and assured that the pushing of the hudud agenda has nothing to do with a unity government with Umno.

Describing the hudud issue as the Achilles’ heel for Pakatan, he said Umno always thought it can use it to break up Pakatan.

Kelantan Menteri Besar Ahmad Yaakob (left) had announced PAS will table a Private Member's Bill in Parliament in order to implement hudud in the northern state.

The state assemblies of Kelantan and Terengganu had passed a state enactment to implement hudud in 1993 and 2003 under PAS rule.

However, the two states were not able to implement hudud due to the federal government blocking the move.

Tough time winning Malay support

On Tuesday, Ahmad Yaakob, his deputy Mohd Nik Amar Abdullah and PAS leaders including Dzulkefly, met with PKR and DAP leaders to explain their stand on the issue.

According to DAP veep Teresa Kok (left), PAS leaders had explained that the party is having a tough time trying to win back Malay support.

“Umno has been telling the rural voters that PAS is controlled by DAP. They said that they were challenged by Umno on the implementation of hudud and thus cannot stay silent.

“If they did not respond, they believe they will lose more votes,” Kok told Malaysiakini after attending the meeting on Tuesday.

Dzulkefly added that PAS as an Islamic party has also been pursuing issues of good governance, fairness, equality, and human rights throughout the years through the Pakatan Common Policy Framework.

However, he said hudud is obligatory for all Muslims and PAS was serious when the Islamic party established the Syariah Enactment back in 1993.

“Even Umno and some Muslims who called themselves liberals, can only delay (the implementation) but they cannot say hudud is barbaric and outdated.

“When Allah says or ordains something, as a Muslim you have no choice but to do your best because you know it is, after all, for the good of all.”

Bitter pills for Pakatan parties

Dzulkefly noted that in the worst-case scenario, all three parties in Pakatan will have bitter pills to swallow.

“PAS may lose the Chinese votes but DAP will also not get the Malay votes. But the one who will suffer most is PKR,” he said.

Therefore, he said PAS will make sure its Pakatan partners know what its game plan is in handling this issue. Indeed, he believes the issue could backfire against Umno.

“Umno can't continue to put us in a spot. We will reverse the tables against them. They are undecided and hesitant on hudud and their partners are even worse.

“We believe we have better partners. Though they may disagree but they understand and empathise with PAS' position,” said the former Kuala Selangor MP.

However DAP national organising secretary Anthony Loke (right) insisted that PAS has fallen into Umno's trap if its leaders indeed think they can win back the Malay support by pushing the hudud agenda.

“This analysis may be too simplistic. PAS leaders also know that they achieved their best result in 1999 elections, not because of hudud, but the Reformasi movement.

“The Malay community was then angry with the judiciary system and Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the then prime minister. PAS did not win bigger in 1995 and 2004 elections after it enacted the hudud enactments in Kelantan and Terengganu.

“In fact, PAS did not lose much support in GE13. Its parliamentary seats reduced only by two, but it won handsomely in Kelantan, Terengganu and Selangor.

“PAS only lost in Kedah. Everyone knows this was due to an internal crisis,” said Loke, who reminded PAS not to pursue the Islamic agenda as it may cause PAS to lose even more.