

PAS concedes Umno's racism luring members
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PAS is concerned that some of its members are being lured into Umno because of the BN party's race politics.

The Islamic party's deputy president Mohamed Sabu said PAS is worried of this development after Malay votes for BN increased in the 13th general election last year.

"We must work hard to break this effort. We are worried that some of our members and supporters are influenced by Umno's racism, especially when they keep harping and playing up Malay issues," Mohamed, better known as Mat Sabu, told Malaysiakini.

The Penang PAS commissioner advised his party's allies, especially DAP, not to be trapped or dragged into this game of racism played by Umno.

He said DAP must not allow itself to be accused of defending the Chinese alone as this is one of the "organised racism" of Umno.

He cited cases of such organised efforts, for example, any attempt to disturb Malay land in Penang, would cause the Malays to jump because the chief minister is a Chinese and from DAP.

Mat Sabu said the situation is worse in Johor and there are many areas where Malays are impoverished but it doesn't become an issue because the menteri besar is a Malay.

"This will never happen in Penang as politics is really about perception and not reality. The perception is Umno defends the Malays in Johor, no matter what happens in reality," he added.

Mat Sabu cited another example in the Iskandar Development area in Johor Baru, where he said land and properties are mostly purchased by outsiders but this is not played up unlike in Penang.

"To this, I can say Umno is successful in making the perception look real," he said.

Explain the real scenario

On how Pakatan Rakyat or PAS would overcome this, Mat Sabu said the parties have to work extra hard to inform the Malays about the real situation.

This would entail going to the ground and show examples of how state governments led by

BN are marginalising the Malays.

"That development which affects Malay kampungs are also happening in BN states, not just Penang.

"To tell them in Johor Baru even the Chinese are not able to afford houses. Only foreigners from Hong Kong or China can buy these expensive units," he said.

"This is what we must be prepared for, if Malays feel threatened, they will rally behind Umno. They would no longer care about corruption and nepotism plaguing the country now," he added.

Mat Sabu said in some cases of corruption and nepotism, the Malays are not upset because it involves someone of their own race.

The PAS leader explained that the current situation is a result of Pakatan giving a BN a shock in the 2008 general election, where the ruling coalition and BN felt that defeat was possible.

"Before this, the rakyat never believed that we could change government. They felt DAP, PAS and PKR could only be the opposition or win several states only," he added.

Racism in the next GE

As for the 14th general election, Mat Sabu said the biggest challenge would be Umno's "planned, institutionalised and organised" racism.

He added that the "racist effort" is successfully carried out through several government initiatives including Biro Tata Negara and the special division in the Information Department (Jasa).

Besides this, Mat Sabu (left) said several NGOs were established to fan racist and religious issues and appear to be above the law.

"The result of this is some Malay votes have returned to BN. When there is such a result, BN and Umno feel that their strategy is successful and will continue to provoke racism," he warned.

"Pakatan lost in certain areas in Shah Alam even among thinking Malays and graduates as ITM is one of the institutions used by certain agents to spread the racist ideology.

"If this organised racism continues, BN hopes to govern Malaysia forever," he added.

He also cited Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim who proposed that parliamentary boundaries be drawn according to race.

If this happens, Mat Sabu said Pakatan might be able to capture as much as 60 percent support from the voters but would not be able to form the federal government.

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