

Youth chief: PAS can't deny it's in crisis
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As cracks grow between PAS and its Pakatan Rakyat allies, PAS Youth chief Suhaizan Kaiat became the first senior leader to acknowledge that the Islamist party has a crisis on its hands and cannot be in denial about it.

Suhaizan called on the PAS leadership to immediately convene a central committee meeting to discuss the recent developments as the scheduled meeting on August 10 was "too late".

"PAS cannot hide and be in a denial syndrome. The fact is PAS is in a serious crisis now.

"Malaysians are watching how PAS manages its internal problem. I am confident with the PAS leadership's wisdom PAS can overcome the problem it is facing," he said in a statement today.

The August 10 meeting is aimed at addressing whether the Selangor menteri besar should be replaced, a contentious point that has shaken Pakatan after PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang (right) and the party's ulama wing unilaterally backed current menteri besar Abdul Khalid Ibrahim.

Abdul Hadi's move came as a surprise as PKR claimed it disregarded a Pakatan leadership council decision, where PAS was represented by six senior leaders, which already agreed on replacing Abdul Khalid.

The six PAS leaders are deputy president Mohamad Sabu, vice-presidents Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man and Husam Musa, secretary-general Mustafa Ali, central committee member Hatta Ramli and Suhaizan, most of whom are seen as progressives.

However, the situation spiralled further into disarray after a WhatsApp communication of the PAS central committee was leaked on the internet.

In the message, PAS central committee member Mohd Zuhdi Marzuki presented a scenario where PAS ditches Pakatan in Selangor to team up with arch-rival Umno as well as getting Abdul Khalid (right) and another PKR representative to defect to its side to grab power in Selangor.

Racial undertone

But what had irked its Pakatan partners more was Mohd Zuhdi's racial undertone in the "analysis" where he said the new coalition would be able to return Malay and Muslim

power and non-Muslims who complained about religious freedom can then be "swatted away" (jentik).

What began as a political issue of replacing Abdul Khalid had exposed the fault lines within PAS. Progressives within the Islamists party stand by the Pakatan decision while the conservative factions continue to back the embattled menteri besar.

Suhaizan appeared to address this, warning that the party's image will be tarnished, but did not go into specifics.

While stating that differences of opinion in PAS were well-meaning and for the good of the party, he stressed that they will become crises if poorly managed.

"PAS needs to improve its competence and effectiveness in managing conflict or crisis especially arising out of differences that exist.

"Failure to manage crisis effectively up to the party's grass roots level will cause this issue to crop up again and again.

"More unfortunate, the party's image and the rakyat's trust in PAS will be eroded even before PAS and Pakatan Rakyat can capture Putrajaya," he said.

He warned that if PAS does not overcome this crisis, PAS' enemies, particularly Umno, will undermine Pakatan's ambition to win Putrajaya in the 14th general election and bring about change in Malaysia.