

'Hadi Move' rocks PAS and PKR, threatens split
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ANALYSIS Before PAS leaders could even reel from the confusion that the Islamic party has submitted two name lists to the Selangor palace for the post of menteri besar, this puzzlement quickly turned into shock and outrage when the contents of the list came to light.

In what has now come to be known as the "Hadi Move", PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang's office, in an apparent defiance of the party's central committee decision, submitted its own list of candidates to replace Abdul Khalid Ibrahim, who has lost the state assembly's majority support.

Going against the Islamic party's repeated insistence that it was not coveting the menteri besar position and respected PKR's prerogative to nominate its candidate, Hadi's office omitted PKR from the first list submitted to the palace.

Instead, the list contained three PAS executive council members - namely Iskandar Ab Samad, Sallehen Mukhyi and Ahmad Yunus Hairi - which was secretly sent to the palace on Wednesday without the party central committee or Selangor PAS' knowledge.

"I do not know at all about this development, I only knew it from the Internet," Iskandar, who is Selangor PAS commissioner, told Malaysiakini.

Even PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu (right) said the party's central committee was in the dark about the new names submitted to the palace.

Malaysiakini understands the letter was submitted to the palace by a PAS Youth exco member who is close to Hadi and that he was accompanied by a member of the Selangor royal family who heads a government-linked company in the state.

Sources told Malaysiakini that when a senior PAS leader who is in charge of the matter caught wind of this, was enraged and demanded that the party president's office withdraw the letter and resubmit a new one.

Hadi's office complied with this demand, in what seemingly was a crisis averted.

PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali reportedly admitted that there was an initial plan to submit the names of PAS candidates only, but stressed that the matter had been rectified with the second letter to the Selangor palace.

Another defiant move

The new list contained the names of two PKR assemblypersons and one PAS assemblyperson, and was sent hours after the first.

But later, Mustafa (right) refused to confirm to the media the names in the new list, seemingly sensing that something was amiss.

Well-placed sources told Malaysiakini that the list omitted the names of PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and her deputy Azmin Ali, whom the PAS central committee had endorsed for the post of menteri besar on Aug 17.

Instead, Hadi's office named Idris Ahmad and Yaakob Sapari as candidates, as well as PAS' own Iskandar.

Both PKR and DAP have only nominated Wan Azizah as their chosen candidate despite the palace's insistence for more than two names from each of the three Pakatan parties.

Hadi, when approached by the media in Marang, remained tight-lipped and refused to confirm whether Wan Azizah's and Azmin's names were dropped.

"I cannot say. After I submitted the names to the sultan, I cannot say anything because I do not want to pre-empt the palace's statement," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

However, PAS' syura council today admitted to overturning the central committee's decision.

"Yes, it's correct. The the syura council decided on the (new) names.

"The syura council is the highest decision-making body," its secretary Nik Muhammad Zawawi Nik Salleh told Malaysiakini.

This is likely to deepen the rift between pro-Pakatan Rakyat leaders in PAS and their conservative counterparts consisting of clerics, mostly based in Kelantan and Terengganu.

But the fact that the syura council has taken responsibility may shift some heat away from Hadi who is seen as a main cause for the prolonged Selangor crisis.

Nonetheless, while Hadi may not necessarily have played an active hand in the manoeuvrings, the fact that this came from his own office, or people within his office, will still reflect on him.

The apparent open defiance of PAS' own executive decision-making body may put Hadi on collision course with his top lieutenants ahead of the party's muktamar or general assembly, due to take place in Johor from Sept 18 to 20.

For Pakatan, it was déjà vu as Hadi and the syura council had single-handedly reset two months of progress in attempting to resolve the Selangor crisis.

The Pakatan leadership council, which also comprises senior PAS representatives, had on July 23 decided to nominate Wan Azizah as the new Selangor menteri besar.

Crack appearing in PAS, PKR

However, Hadi unilaterally backed Khalid to stay on, opening a can of worms which was thought to have been resolved on Aug 17 after the PAS central committee declared it was withdrawing support for Khalid and would back Wan Azizah and Azmin.

But Hadi's second rebuff of the Pakatan leadership decision, and this time his party's own central committee in submitting another list of menteri besar candidates to the palace, has even prompted a senior PKR leader, who did not want to be named, to question whether they were being "played out" by PAS.

Several PKR leaders have issued angry statements after a four-hour politburo meeting last night, with PKR Youth chief Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad (left) demanding answers from PAS.

"It is important for the people of Selangor to get an explanation so that the confusion and questions can be answered," Nik Nazmi said.

The 'Hadi Move' has not only created cracks in Pakatan but the the protracted Selangor crisis is also beginning to show fault lines in PKR.

PKR has seen a leadership transition after its party election and a majority of the new central leadership council members seemed to be aligned to Azmin.

Azmin's supporters had previously attempted to push for him to become menteri besar but this move was shot down during the previous leadership, which insisted on Wan Azizah.

Azmin himself has pledged support for Wan Azizah but if the stalemate prolongs, the new PKR leadership may be inclined to revive the idea of Azmin as menteri besar, thereby threatening PKR with its own split.

The 'Hadi Move' has moved beyond the survival of the Pakatan coalition and is now threatening to destabilise both PAS and PKR

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