

Khalid: PAS in Pakatan didn't lose Malay support

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INTERVIEW PAS leader Khalid Samad took a swipe at party conservatives who claim that the Islamic party saw an erosion of its core Malay-Muslim support because of its membership in the three-party Pakatan Rakyat coalition.

"We have never had (monopoly on) Malay support - how can you say we are losing Malay support? You cannot compare (today with) the 2008 GE and 2013 GE..." said Khalid, who is Shah Alam member of parliament.

"In 2008, Umno was half asleep and quite complacent but in 2013, they were fully prepared for the onslaught from PR (Pakatan). Because of that, they managed to regain 1 or 2 percent of Malay votes.

"In 2008, they did not have the (benefit of the) financial assistance of BR1M (Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia). Umno was so complacent that (former BN Selangor Menteri Besar Mohamad) Khir Toyo was still saying 'zero opposition'," said Khalid.

Some PAS leaders from the conservative ulama faction have repeatedly called for PAS to leave Pakatan, blaming its tie-up with DAP and PKR for costing the party Malay-Muslim votes at the last general election.

In the 2013 nationwide polls, PAS saw a slight drop in Malay votes but picked up more non-Muslim votes, particularly in semi-urban and urban areas.

Khalid pointed out that those calling for PAS to leave Pakatan over its dip in Malay votes must realise that even with the best efforts of Umno and BN in 2013, they only managed to gain back a very small percentage of Malay votes.

The PAS central committee member said that since Pakatan won Selangor six years ago, the Islamic party had been working quietly on the ground.

"If PAS is patient enough to allow the dust to settle such that people can see what you've done, you will be able to increase not only Malay but also the non-Malay support," he said.

"I don't see why it (being in Pakatan) should be the wrong strategy because currently DAP or PKR does not shackle us.

"From the moment we took over the government of Selangor, we were allowed to work as freely as we want - meeting the hundreds of mosque officials, the working committees of the kampungs.

"We were able to work and interact with the Malay community and let them know what PAS is all about," said Khalid.

The Terengganu PAS clique

Khalid said the clamour to leave Pakatan cropped out very often within PAS and this is not something new.

"Maybe they have this problem in Terengganu because in Terengganu, it would be very difficult for the PAS leadership to explain why you want PR, (and) why you want to share power (with other parties) in PR.

"(This is) because the people in Terengganu live in a different political reality and maybe that is why the Terengganu PAS leadership is more keen on leaving PR - I am assuming this," stressed Khalid.

PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang (left), who is the head of Terengganu PAS, has been at times seen to side with those who call for PAS to leave Pakatan.

Khalid pointed out that those wanting the Islamic party out of Pakatan fail to understand the need for power-sharing in multi-religious Malaysia.

"In Kelantan, we are in complete control. They don't understand that we cannot make Selangor into Kelantan or Terengganu. Or even Kedah.

"When they don't understand this (power sharing) ... the younger ustaz question why we are not MB (in Selangor). Now, as Selangor MB Khalid Ibrahim is an independent (assemblyperson), they still question...

"For the secular educated (in PAS), we are more pragmatic. The religious educated have a tendency to pass judgement and have always seen things in black and white. Politics is not like that," said Khalid.