

Walk the talk, PAS No 2 tells party clerics

MalaysiaKini.com

Sept 15, 2014

Known for being a straight shooter, PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu has called on the Islamists in the party to "reform" and "upgrade" so that the ulama leadership remains relevant.

PAS must "walk the talk" and not let a 'Kamal Attaturk' rise because the people are fed up with the rhetoric on Islam, as what happened in Turkey, Mohamad told Malaysiakini today.

Popularly known as Mat Sabu, this PAS leader has come under fire from Islamists in PAS-linked blogs for saying the party should not be "bandying" its Islamist credentials, for it may one day find itself irrelevant to Malaysians.

Mat Sabu had said PAS should return to principles of social justice, taking the example from its non-Muslim counterparts, for the day would come when a 'Jokowi' would be elected into office.

He further said that Kamal Attaturk, the secular Turkish leader, came into power at a time when the clerics were perceived to have turned a blind eye to the corruption and decadence of the then sultanate and the caliphate of the Ottomans.

Turkey, he added, turned completely secular when the orthodox ulama were "ignorant and unaware of the changes around them, especially in the events taking place in Europe, which were working against Turkey at that time".

Mat Sabu said his support for people's leaders of all faiths and not just Islamic personalities, did not make him any less of a Muslim.

"I appreciate Ayatollah Khomeini (of Iran, left)), Hussein Nasrallah (of Hezbollah, Lebanon), Maududi (writer), Hassan al Banna (Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt), Ho Chi Minh for uniting Vietnam against US, Fidel Castro for uniting Cuba, Mother Teresa for being fit for the Nobel Prize.

"I respect them because they earned their respect from the people for what they do for the people.

"Admiring them, however, does not mean I adhere to their schools of thought and religion.

"I am a Muslim first. I appreciate the ulama, but the ulama must act relevant to the times and not let Muslims find an escape because they are fed up with rhetorics."

Iranian model

Mat Sabu said he was one of the first in PAS to moot the idea for ulama leadership in the early 1980s, based on the Iranian model and that he still appreciates ulama.

"I still have respect for ulama. I am not promoting for a 'Jokowi' but what I am saying is we cannot just go to the people and talk about Islam. We must match our talk with actions. Jokowi (left) was elected for his actions."

Mat Sabu said he is afraid that if PAS does not "reform" according to Islamic culture as stated in the party policies, the people will look for a 'Jokowi' and soon look for a 'Kamal Attaturk', who would be completely secular.

He also stated that PAS Islamists must realise that in the present world, it is the Western and non-Muslim countries that are practising Islamic culture more than the Muslim countries.

"If the Japanese proclaim Allah is God and Muhammad the prophet, they would be the best of Muslims automatically, because they are already practising anti-corruption, cleanliness and are always on time.

"PAS must return to practising the values of Islam and not just talk about fiqh (jurisprudence). Social justice must be included. We cannot talk just about laws. Pakistan has all the Islamic laws as in the syariah but it is a failure as an Islamic state.

"Muslims are reading the Quran but the ones practising the Islamic culture seem to be the non-Muslims. PAS must return to the Islamic culture and reform so that we remain relevant with the times and the people," Mat Sabu added.

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