

PAS Youth chief warns fortress Kelantan may fall

MalaysiaKini.com

Sept 16, 2014

MUKTAMAR PAS Youth chief Suhaizan Kaiat warned that the Islamic party may lose its last bastion of Kelantan which it has ruled since 1990.

In his policy speech at the opening of the PAS Youth muktamar or annual general assembly today, he said local voter support for the party fell under 50 percent in the last general election.

He said PAS was only able to maintain power with the help of outstation voters, who returned to the northern state to vote.

"This is a signal that local Kelantanese are not satisfied with the performance of our leaders.

"Please be reminded that Kelantanese are known for their critical and dynamic political stance.

"History has proven that they can reject PAS if they are unsatisfied with our leaders' performance or our state government," he told delegates at Dewan Choon Moi in Kota Tinggi.

Suhaizan pointed out that the possibility follows PAS losing Kedah in the last election, which he said was due to internal problems that gave a negative impression of the party.

"PAS could only withstand one term in Kedah as was the case in Terengganu during the 10th general election (1999).

"In contrast, Pakatan (Rakyat) managed to defend its victory for more than a term in Selangor and Penang," he said.

Nik Aziz's retirement also a factor

Suhaizan also noted that the risk of losing Kelantan has become more real with the retirement of PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat as the state's menteri besar.

"There are some Kelantanese who may not agree with PAS but their love for Tok Guru (Nik Aziz) prompted them to vote for PAS.

"For some voters, Tok Guru is more influential than PAS itself," he said.

However, he said the Kelantan PAS government would be tested without the "Tok Guru"

factor.

As such, he urged the Kelantan government to conduct more detailed planning for the state and resolve any internal problems.

"Changes demanded by the rakyat must be heard, value must be added to the Kelantan government, electoral pledges must be fulfilled and leaders must feel the pulse of the rakyat," he said.

Suhaizan pledged the Youth wing's support, adding that if these are done, he was confident the state could be defended in the 14th general election.

The Youth chief also briefly spoke on the implementation of hudud in Kelantan, stressing that the Islamic party would only roll out the theocratic law through the democratic process.

"In the context of Kelantan, PAS Youth urges all quarters to understand that PAS has won for five terms in Kelantan on the promise of implementing the Islamic criminal law," he said.

However, he said PAS Youth would still engage in dialogue with the public on the matter.

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