

## **Don't turn 'PAS for all' to 'PAS for PAS'**

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MUKTAMAR Amid strained relations between PAS and its Pakatan Rakyat partners, several party delegates reminded the party's muktamar today of its "PAS for all" slogan, warning against turning it into "PAS for PAS".

The first day of the three-day 60th PAS Muktamar in Batu Pahat saw the delegates, all of whom were from west coast with more multi-racial constituencies, making the case for continued cooperation within Pakatan.

Perak delegate Noh Ahmad even appealed to his Malay-majority east coast counterparts, which are mostly dominated by conservatives and are critical of Pakatan, to consider the political realities on their end.

"'PAS for all' is not an empty slogan. It has contributed to our win in several seats and states.

"Therefore Perak PAS hopes the leadership on the east coast can understand our situation on the west coast, the environment is very different," he said.

He stressed that PAS cannot hope to win by only relying only on Malays, lamenting their entrenchment in Umno.

"History has proven that the Malays can be dogmatic towards the notion that only Umno can defend and save them, it is difficult to break this.

"And when there's infighting among us, it makes it even more difficult to break down this wall,' he said.

He also urged clerics in the party to engage the people on the ground more.

'Abandoning the rakyat'

Echoing this was Malacca's delegate Yuhaizad Abdullah who warned that PAS abandoning Pakatan would be abandoning the rakyat whose votes initially brought the coalition together.

"Abandoning Pakatan means abandoning the hopes and aspirations of the rakyat... 'PAS for all' will become 'PAS for PAS'," he said.

He also urged the party's clerics not to lower themselves by giving labels to others in the party such as "hypocrites", "traitors" or "liberals".

"Do not simply label those who support Pakatan as traitors. Those who are cosy in Umno's house should also be reprimanded," he said.

Likewise, Johor's delegate Zulhilmi Rohani too stressed the need of not only relying on a single race for support.

He added that the days of PAS going it alone was over.

"Pakatan allows PAS to be the best example of the values of the Quran which acknowledges all races.

"Regardless who leads PAS, they must be based on universal values.

"We cannot blame anyone if the rakyat reject us because we are only concerned about our sentiments for one race," he said.

Reconciliatory tone

The Islamic party has seen its non-Malay support increase to the highest level in its history through Pakatan.

However, following the souring of ties due to the Selangor menteri besar crisis, the party has recently experienced some backlash.

PAS and its Pakatan allies are at loggerheads over who should be the next Selangor menteri besar with PKR and DAP backing PKR president Wan Azizah Wan Ismail but the Islamic party has refused to back her.

The situation was aggravated at the conservatives-dominated PAS Youth muktamar on Tuesday and Wednesday as delegates launched attacks on its Pakatan partners over the crisis.

PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang's policy speech this morning which asked Pakatan not to betray the coalition, has also upset its allies.

PKR secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution (left) in a Twitter posting today had questioned whether it was arch-rival's Umno's annual general assembly that was going on.

Within PAS, pro-Pakatan leaders and conservatives have also clashed over the matter.

However, delegates at the main muktamar this evening were measured in their words and demonstrated wisdom as they urged to diffuse of the crisis.

Zulhilmi urged an end to the tit-for-tat among party leaders, and instead urged a proper forum for such discussions.

## Mat Sabu not spared

However, the muktamar today was not totally subdued, as Selangor's Sallehen Mukhyi, who is also the state's exco, fired a salvo at PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu.

"Do not let there be leaders who try to tell our members that Indonesia's Jokowi (Widodo) is better than our president or that people who fight on socialist policies are better than our leadership," he said.

Mohamad (right) in his policy speech at the PAS Youth muktamar on Tuesday had urged unity in Malaysia's Islamic movement, pointing out how voters had chosen Jokowi as president over a fragmented Islamic movement in Indonesia.

He had also highlighted how Malay youths had joined Parti Sosialis Malaysia's activities, warning that if PAS Youth did not reform this trend may continue.

Conservative delegates who had not been happy at Mohamad's criticism, since even before the muktamar, had staged a walkout during the speech.

Sallehen also defended PAS' decisions in the Selangor crisis and warned against quarters trying to "make holes" in the ark which is the party.

Notwithstanding the brief fireworks the general tone today was reconciliatory and even Kuala Krai's delegate Zulifli Yacob had slammed PAS Youth for its walkout and instead urged a more diplomatic approach.

However, this tone may change tomorrow as more delegates take the stage, including those from the east coast states who have been critical of PAS leaders that advocate for continued cooperation in Pakatan.