

Wan Azizah: I am a grandmother, so what?

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By Susan Loone

PMTG PAUH PKR's Permatang Pauh candidate Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail has slammed critics who described her as a 'grandmother' when compared with the younger BN candidate, Suhaimi Sabudin, who is 44.

Wan Azizah, 63, has been nicknamed "grandmother with a fan (nenek kipas)" by her opponents, for she is often seen waving her hand fan during her campaign walks.

"You can call me a grandmother, so what? I am a proud grandmother!" she said to loud applause from a crowd of 600 at the 'Jom Balik Undi' dinner at SP Arena in Seberang Jaya last night.

Wan Azizah's arrival at the hall was greeted by two dancing lions that trailed her to the dinner table.

Before she spoke, her grandchildren went up on stage to present her with several bouquets of flowers.

She hugged and kissed the children as she received the flowers.

In her speech, Wan Azizah said she was continuing the struggle for justice for the sake of the younger generation, including her children and grandchildren.

'Starting point for things to get better'

"This sacrifice is a starting point for things to get better in the country," she added.

Wan Azizah is contesting the parliamentary seat against Suhaimi and two others - PRM's Azman Shah Othman and Independent Salleh Isahak - in the by-election that will be held tomorrow.

The PKR president is contesting the seat for the fourth time after her husband, Anwar Ibrahim, failed to obtain a royal pardon for his sodomy conviction.

Wan Azizah said two major tragedies have befallen all Malaysians recently - the burden of the goods and services tax (GST) and the loss of freedom of expression.

Recently, more than 30 politicians and activists, including former Bar Council chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasen, were detained in connection with the anti-GST rally in Kuala Lumpur on May Day.

Wan Azizah said Malaysia is already an "independent and free" country.

"So why do we have to close our mouths and not speak? Please come home to vote and send a clear message to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak that you do not accept these actions," she added.

Other speakers last night were PKR secretary-general Rafizi Ramli, vice-president Tian Chua, deputy Youth chief Dr Afif Bahardin and Penang executive councillor Phee Boon Poh of the DAP.

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