

## **PAS backs down on dress code for muktamar**

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**By Kow Gah Chie**

PAS has relaxed its dress code for journalists covering its muktamar (general assembly) next week, after a backlash from MCA and media organisations.

It however maintained its ruling that media organisations could be banned if their reports impacted badly on the party.

The amended list of guidelines was read out by the party's muktamar director Takiyuddin Hassan (photo) at the Parliament lobby, after copies were distributed to the media.

"These are the official guidelines. Male reporters should wear proper attire and shoes. Female Muslim reporters should cover their aurat, while non-Muslim females should dress decently," he said.

It was reported the initial dress code had made compulsory for male reporters to wear former office attire, while striped or checkered long-sleeved shirts, as well as T-shirts, were not allowed.

Female Muslim journalists were to wear baju kurung, kebaya labuh or long-sleeved blouses, while non-Muslim female media personnel were not to wear sleeveless tops and tight-fitting or revealing clothes.

### **A 'reasonable requirement'**

In addition, the media was required to write truthfully and with integrity, and practise courtesy.

"The secretariat has a right to cancel coverage approval for the relevant media at anytime," read the guideline.

MCA had criticised PAS, saying it was behaving like the Taliban. However the Kota Baru parliamentarian denied PAS was interfering with press freedom.

"The media can still spin. Just make sure it doesn't write misleading stories to the point that they can be construed as malicious. This is a gentle reminder; don't take so seriously," he said.

He defended the guideline as a 'reasonable requirement' saying: "We are press friendly."

He also cautioned other parties from attempting to lobby for PAS candidates, likening this to football match-fixing.

"Let's us contest among ourselves [...] there shouldn't be any interference," he said.

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