

'DPM, stop Umno's right slide to woo non-Malays'

MalaysiaKini.com

Aug 10, 2015

Kow Gah Chie

Newly minted Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has to make more substantive moves to woo the non-Malay support, said an Umno leader.

Personal efforts - such as speaking in Mandarin and telling people that his foster father is Chinese - are not enough to address the hardline stance he is known for, said Saifuddin Abdullah, former Deputy Higher Education Minister.

"It's a good thing that he is warming up to non-Malays, because he is now already a deputy prime minister.

"But sometimes, an individual effort to show that you are warming up to the non-Malays may not be sufficient," said Saifuddin (photo), who is also the CEO of Global Movement of Moderates Foundation.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also an Umno vice-president, needs to get the Malay-based party to take steps towards the centre, said Saifuddin.

"I think he needs to encourage Umno to show the party is not moving to the right," he said, adding his non-Malay friends opined that the party opted for a right-wing stance.

Known for his hardline approach to national policies, Zahid had surprised the public by speaking Mandarin and telling others that his foster father is Chinese.

He did this in an interview with the mainstream media.

"The inuendos - when Umno talked about Chinese tsunami and Kelantan Umno supporting the hudud bill - have caused my non-Malays friends to say that Umno is moving to the right.

"Umno is a progressive and liberal party as stipulated by its constitution," he noted.

If BN wants to go one step further towards being progressive, it should activate direct membership, he said.

BN must mull the implementation of direct membership, which is already stated under its constitution for the people to join and be a channel for various discourses, including on race and religion.

Most of the ruling coalition parties are race-based and direct membership can be a platform to attract people to join BN, he said.

The direct membership concept was mooted after the BN setback in 2008 general election when it lost two-third's control of Parliament for the first time.

Saifuddin said those who do not want to align themselves to the component parties can join as BN members.

The BN supreme council had agreed on the concept on Nov 20, 2010. However, the plan did not materialise.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/308083>