

**Al-Arqam founder passes away**  
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Ashaari Muhammad, founder of outlawed Al-Arqam movement, died this afternoon at the Ipoh Specialist Centre as a result of lung disease.

rufaqa ashaari muhammad 291106

The 73-year-old charismatic and eye-liner wearing leader of the Islamic sect is survived by four wives and 37 children.

Ashaari and four other followers were detained without trial in 1994 under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for two years over purported deviationist teachings.

Ashaari, who was also Global Ikhwan Sdn Bhd chairman, was admitted to the hospital three days ago, while visiting the company's network in Ipoh.

Affectionately known as Abuya to his followers, Ashaari breathed his last at 2.10pm, said a hospital spokesperson.

A Global Ikhwan employee Marzuki Hussein, 57, said Ashaari, who arrived in Ipoh after visiting Thailand and Kedah, was rushed to the hospital on Monday after complaining of chest pain.

Speaking to reporters after a funeral prayer for the late Ashaari at a company's guest house here today, Marzuki said Ashaari would be buried in his home town, Rembau.

Ashaari hearse left for his family home in Kampung Pilin, Rembau at 5.30pm.

Al-Arqam was banned by the National Fatwa Council in August 1994 while Ashaari was detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) from Sept 2 to 24, 2004 before he was placed under restricted residence in Rawang and later in Labuan for 10 years.

Al-Arqam or Jamaah Aurad Muhammadiyah's activities was at its height in late 80s and 90s and is reported to have about 10,000 followers.

The movement, which is said to spread deviationist Islamic teachings through missionary activities, also branched out into educational, publishing, commercial and agricultural activities.

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