

S'wak Pakatan set to go toe-to-toe with BN
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The newly-formed Pakatan Rakyat Sarawak Council has agreed that the opposition coalition will face off against BN in one-on-one battles in the upcoming state elections.

The 20-member council comprises five members each from PR components DAP, PKR, PAS and Snap.

NONE Among the notable members of the council are DAP's Chong Chien Jien and Wong Ho Leng, as well as PKR's Baru Bian (left).

This follows the opposition coalition's announcement that it will activate its election machinery to prepare for snap elections, with special focus on Sarawak.

"We believe that the state elections are very near," said PKR deputy president Syed Husin Ali told Malaysiakini today, echoing what opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim had said in his announcement last week.

Pakatan has been preparing for the Sarawak elections, which must be held latest by July next year but rumoured to be called in a few months' time.

Syed Husin attended the inaugural meeting of the state PR council along with DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang and PAS deputy president Nasharuddin Mat Isa last night, to represent and express support for the state leadership council.

Preparing for battle

While PR Sarawak was set up in April this year, this is the first time that the opposition coalition state council meeting has been convened.

pkr national congress 301108 syed husin ali Syed Husin (right) said that the purpose of the council is to handle all state-level affairs, including upcoming elections.

"They all agreed that we must first of all agree on a one-on-one fight against the BN. It is like when we (PR) started out in the peninsula," he added.

Asked if this means that Pakatan is currently united and prepared to face the BN, he said, "God willing."

Lim Kit Siang also stressed that the national PR leaders were there purely to provide support.

"We are not here to take over their decision-making, we are just here to support them. We left after giving our speeches, and left them to decide amongst themselves," Lim told Malaysiakini when contacted.

Forging common goals

NONE Wong (right), who held a press conference after the council meeting last night, explained that the meeting aims to provide space for the component parties to discuss the thorny issue of seat allocations.

He added that the meeting, which was organised by the DAP, will also seal the deal for the coalition to jointly field only one candidate in each state seat, and to make sure they capture at least the 36 out of 71 available state assembly seats needed to wrest the state from BN.

Wong also explained that the council was structured flat, without any posts so that all members are equals and can express themselves freely. This was to avoid infighting, he said.

Wong said that this inaugural meeting has adopted a four-point resolution to chart the course ahead, that is:

- * To gear up for Sarawak polls,
- * To resolve to capture Sarawak from BN,
- * To form a Pakatan committee to coordinate seat allocations, and
- * To come up with a joint manifesto for the election.

Wong reveals that the contentious matter of seat allocations has not yet been broached, and that it will be addressed in coming meetings.

PKR will host the next round of meetings, followed by Snap and then PAS.

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