

**I am not Khalid's crony, says Faekah Husin**  
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Refuting rumours that she is a crony of Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim during his Guthrie days, his new political secretary Faekah Husin says that she had never even known her present boss during his time in the GLC.

NONE "Yes, in 2001 I had applied to Guthrie for some business. But I was (initially) rejected. I then went to the management to negotiate, but I never met Khalid; (I met) someone else," Faekah told Malaysiakini in an exclusive interview at her office on Wednesday.

She said that in the end all she finally received from Guthrie was a contract for legal work for some 60 units of houses, no more.

"Is it so easy for someone to be labelled a Khalid crony?" she asked, implying that the meagre business she got from Guthrie fell short of a lion's share that a crony would be expected to get..

"I only knew him in 2005, that was when he started to get involved in politics. I was already in Keadilan then," the former lawyer said.

She stressed that even then, she did not get her current job because she knew Khalid but because of her problem-solving skills owing to over 20 years' experience as a lawyer.

"He did not offer me (the post), he appealed to me. If it was an offer there (would be) considerations, but he needed someone to assist him in the administration. He said that it was my national service."

'National service'

And as part of her 'national service' Faekah said that she had to give up her successful legal practice and forgo the comfortable life she had before, for the less lucrative pay of a civil servant.

Asked how she coped with the transition, she said that she has her savings and several houses to her name she can liquidate, having already sold off one of her two luxury cars.

"But money is not the object, Khalid himself could have made RM1.5 million a year working in the private sector, but he is here doing his national service, and I am doing mine," she said with a steady gaze.

Faekah described her role as more of an efficiency expert to help solve problems in the state administration.

"This is what the public wants, to see their problems solved," she stressed.

khalid ibrahim and selangor stateShe related that most of her time is now devoted to ironing out wrinkles in the state's administration by working directly with the public and assisting them with their issues.

"An uncle would come to me with his problem with so and so. I will call the state official in question and talk. I will explain the issue and look at what solutions can be found and get

the official to assign an officer to help the uncle," said the former lawyer.

Faekah said the job was a gruelling one with a punishing schedule, especially to keep up with the workaholic Khalid, who stays up nights to think and read.

"He would call me in the wee hours and ask me a question or assign me to find out something. I will then have to call the relevant party to follow up.

"That is why, everywhere I go I carry this book with me - a phone directory - so that I can get in touch with all state officers when I need to," said Faekah, pointing to her faithful contacts list.

However the former lawyer saw no problem with her new job as she was used to a similar pace whilst practising law.

"I don't even take long breaks during Raya, there's one day before for preparations and one day after for visits. I asked Khalid and he said it was the same (for him). I sometimes work until 10 at night," she claimed.

#### Correcting perception

Faekah has no regrets entering public office, seeing her role as crucial in increasing the state government's efficiency and correcting the perception that there is a rift between Pakatan and the state civil servants.

NONE "There is this perception in the party that the civil servants are sabotaging the state government. But now, I am also a civil servant. How can you say that I want to sabotage the party?"

"That is the message I want to send to the party," she said.

The political secretary admitted that there are a few budak hitam (black sheep) in the civil service who are causing problems, but the rest are not guilty.

"We should focus on dealing with the (problematic) few and not accuse the civil servants en masse.

"Some of the civil servants too are tired of the old BN government and their antics. And I believe that without their help we would not have won in the last election," she said.

Faekah believes the party must recognise this, and put a stop to the unfair blame-game on the civil service.

#### Gaining trust

Faekah sees it as her role to bridge the gap from the civil service side as she believes that many civil servants are wary of Pakatan due to constant accusations of sabotage.

"We need to show that we trust them as much as demonstrate that they can trust us. It is to be understood that they have been serving under the BN government for a long time."

Therefore her first task on the job was to visit all the senior civil servants to build or rekindle her rapport with them.

On one hand Faekah said that she wanted to remind them that her authority emanated from the MB.

On the other, she wants to earn their trust by showing them that she is also a civil servant like them.

She stressed that party representatives appointed into state owned companies should adopt the same attitude towards their roles.

"Their role must be to reform the state GLCs and not to enrich themselves," said Faekah

Performance now, not popularity

In this respect she is highly favourable to divorcing the party from the state administration, pointing to the case of Khalid who had relinquished political duties of state PKR chief to Gombak MP Azmin Ali.

"This is true separation of powers, this is the way to go," she declared.

Asked how Khalid can ensure the political clout for re-election if he has no political influence, Faekah did not see any problem.

"That is not an issue; if the people see that Khalid is doing his job they will still vote him back in. If the people in Bandar Tun Razak and Ijok vote him in you know he has performed in their eyes."

Performance, she stressed, is more important than popularity.

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