

**More reps disclaim 'pro-Azmin' label**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**September 7, 2010**

Several Selangor and Negri Sembilan PKR state assemblypersons have disclaimed involvement with a group of elected representatives which voiced open support for vice-president Azmin Ali to contest for the party deputy presidency.

NONEThis morning, a press conference in Shah Alam was held by a group led by Kota Anggerik state assemblyperson Yaakob Sapari, purportedly representing nine of the party's state assemblypersons from Selangor and four from Negeri Sembilan who endorse Azmin.

This comes in the wake of a similar press conference held yesterday by a group of PKR MPs, claiming to represent 18 parliamentarians and two senators.

It was later established that not all the MPs named by the group had given permission for their names to be used to lend support to Azmin's candidacy.

Today was no different as a large number of state assemblypersons purportedly from the group expressed surprise that they were named by Yaakob.

Among them was Kajang state assemblyperson Lee Kim Sin, who said that while he did not object to the function this morning, he is 'independent' and did not belong to any faction as asserted by Yaakob.

"My opinion is, it is too early to declare any support because further nominations may yet come in. I have to wait until after the nominations and see the situation.

"Although Azmin is the Selangor state chief, we have to choose a leader based on the party's needs and abilities, not according to faction," said Lee.

What if Syed Husin contests?

Others who claimed that they were named by Yaakob without their permission were Chai Tong Chai (Chuah), Aminudin Harun (Sikamat), Gan Pei Nei (Rawang) and Rodziah Ismail (Batu Tiga).

Chai said he was against stating support for any candidate at the moment on the assumption that PKR deputy president Syed Husin Ali would not defend his post.

"It is still early to declare support for anyone. What if Syed Husin Ali (incumbent) decides to seek re-election?" he asked.

Syed Husin, though expected to step down, is well respected in the party and any attempt to challenge him would likely split the party.

Aminudin confirmed that he was asked to join the press conference this morning, but declined.

"To me this is an internal (arrangement), so there is no need to put my name if I'm not coming... In Negri Sembilan, members are focused on fulfilling their Ramadan obligations rather than the party polls," said Aminudin.

'Wait for their manifesto first'

He added that the press conference by Yaakob's group may even prove to be of detriment to the party.

"Today this group has a press conference. Tomorrow there might be another press conference by a different group. This is not healthy for the party," he said.

When contacted, Gan said she was surprised that she had been named as one of the 13 state assemblypersons who endorsed Azmin for the deputy presidency.

"I didn't know my name was in the list. I was informed by (Batu Caves state assemblyperson) Amirudin Shari to attend the press conference today but he didn't state the details," she said.

Gan said that as nominations have yet to begin, it was improper to make any announcements to declare support for anyone.

"Secondly, the most important thing is, the candidates should also release their manifesto. Only then can we decide whether to support him or her," she said.

'200 percent support for Azmin'

Meanwhile, Port Dickson assemblyperson M Ravi confirmed that he consented to being on the list, adding that he supported Azmin "200 percent".

"We shouldn't give a new guy too high a post," said Ravi, in an apparent reference to Zaid Ibrahim, who has stated his intention contest for No 2.

Taman Medan assemblyperson Haniza Talha said that she, too, supports Azmin, but this does not necessarily translate to votes from the 400,000 members.

"The nomination is from a division member, not me. We have to be fair, and as a democratic party, we have to undergo this path. There are no shortcuts.

"Before making decisions we should discuss with the grassroots members first. What's the hurry? The nominations will only be made after Hari Raya," she said.

Additional reporting by Ng Ling Fong and Abd Rahim Sabri.

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