

Gerakan's 'sack mufti' call irks PAS Youth
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PAS Youth is seeing red over the call by the Federal Territory Gerakan for the Perak Sultan to sack his mufti Harussani Zakaria.

Leaders of the Islamic-based opposition party feel that the Barisan Nasional (BN) component has gone too far and encroached on the religious sensitivities of Muslims.

The reactions ranged from calling for police action against Gerakan to invitations for a dialogue over the issue.

Among the resolutions passed during last Sunday's Federal Territory Gerakan convention, the division had called for the removal of Harussani (left) over the spread of a SMS several months ago regarding rumours of a mass baptism of Malay youths in a church.

The SMS cited Harussani as confirming the baptism would take place but this turned out to be false.

Police report

PAS Youth is planning to file a police report and submit a memorandum to Gerakan over the resolution.

According to them, the resolution was "rude, extreme, and insulting" to Islam as well as to the institution of Malay Rulers in the country.

A demonstration will also be held against Gerakan after the Friday prayers at the Masjid Jamek in Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur.

Bukit Katil (Malacca) PAS Youth chief Sofi Wahab said the resolution proved that Federal Territory Gerakan leaders went beyond the laws and provisions of the Federal Constitution.

"Gerakan has no business interfering in the matter of the appointment of muftis. Gerakan has acted rudely in getting involved in the affairs of the Islamic religion when it called for the sacking of the Perak Mufti," he said in a letter to Gerakan president Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

In Kuala Lumpur, Titiwangsa PAS Youth deputy chief Suhaimi Abdul Aziz said Gerakan's "malicious incitement of hatred" towards the institution of mufti and religious scholars is a betrayal of efforts towards communal integration and mutual respect.

"PAS respects the beliefs of all religions, but this does not mean (non-Muslims) can seek to interfere or act as a cinder to inflame Muslims against other communities," he said in a statement.

Remain calm

Meanwhile, Penang-based PAS Youth exco member Mujahid Yusof Rawa called for "all quarters to remain calm" despite the "challenge" posed by Gerakan to national integration.

Mujahid, who also heads the party's national unity bureau, said the Gerakan resolution had strayed from "objective and healthy discussions" as it touched upon the prerogatives of the sultans and King over the appointment and dismissal of their muftis.

He said what Gerakan failed to understand, is the integral and historical position of Islam in the country as provided for by Article 3 of the constitution pertaining to the "religion of the federation".

This does not, however, infringe on the freedom of non-Muslims to practice their respective religions, he added.

Touching on the concern voiced by Gerakan members last Sunday that non-Muslims are made to participate in Syariah court hearings, Mujahid explained that syariah courts' jurisdiction is restricted to matters of Islamic family law, syariah crimes and the division of property.

"The participation of non-Muslims in syariah courts is part of its quest to seek justice in (such) cases that involve Muslims as well as non-Muslims," he said in a statement today.

"Although non-Muslims are not bound by the decisions of the syariah courts, the right to hear claims that are related to them is part of the syariah justice that must be respected.

"If the issue is to reject the syariah courts as a legal procedure where non-Muslims participate in, how are those cases involving Muslims to be solved? The issue is one of legal process, not simply a matter of whether a non-Muslim is bound or not bound to abide by the syariah courts," he added.

Mujahid called on all interested parties to bring their misunderstandings and confusions to the discussion table.

"PAS is prepared to discuss and consult in order to shape the future of this country, one that is in need of political change and a new mandate that has the confidence of all races," he said.

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