

**Zaid withdraws from No 2 race, quit all posts**  
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Pakatan Rakyat coordinator Zaid Ibrahim has announced his withdrawal from the PKR deputy presidency contest, also quitting all posts he holds in the party.

However, he has pledged to continue his fight for the opposition's cause.

NONEZaid, who dropped the bombshell in a scathing blog posting early this morning, said he has become disillusioned with the party.

He accused PKR leaders of being involved in "malpractices and electoral fraud" in the party's first direct election.

"I was (made an offer) to join this party in the belief that I could promote enlightened and progressive politics; nurture and develop principled political values and (a) culture that I consider indispensable to the development of democracy and good governance in this country. I was mistaken," said Zaid, who was Federal Territories PKR chief.

"Over the course of the party elections, events have shown that the leadership actively condones malpractices and electoral fraud to achieve its designed objectives.

"I am certain that any political party with such hypocritical and false values will not be able to offer meaningful reforms to the people of this country."

Zaid was in a three-way fight for the deputy presidency along with incumbent vice-presidents Azmin Ali and Mustaffa Kamil Ayub.

He was trailing frontrunner Azmin by nearly 2,600 votes in the second week of polling, from half of the party divisions. The rest will vote over the next two weekends.

In the last unofficial tally, Azmin had received a substantial boost when nine PKR divisions in Sabah delivered almost 1,500 votes in his favour - three times more than for Zaid.

Azmin's overall unofficial tally stands at 6,925, while Zaid is said to have netted 3,905. Perak PKR chief Mustaffa Kamil Ayub trails far behind with 1,215 votes.

Swipe at Anwar's supporters

The former de facto law minister had previously called for a halt in the elections, with backing from Mustaffa who had alleged that the process was rigged.

Zaid wrote that he made this decision because there was no attempt on the part of the party leadership to address the various issues of manipulation and unfair electoral practices, although these issues were raised repeatedly.

Yesterday, PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail had denied irregularities when they rejected allegations that ballot papers were up for sale.

Zaid, a successful lawyer, expressed his utmost disappointment in not being able to

continue in this "flawed electoral process", but pledged to remain committed to the opposition's agenda.

"I will continue to speak about the issues of the common people. Together, we will continue our unabated struggle towards a better government for the people.

"I also wish to thank all the members who have supported me and placed their faith in the cause of reform."

He also took a swipe at de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim when he said that he hopes the "adoring fans" of the party supremo will no longer accuse him of being a "spoiler" who stands in the way of their march to Putrajaya.

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