

400,000 PKR members, where art thou?
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The recently concluded PKR elections has left a question mark whether the party has 400,000 members as claimed.

Two former PKR leaders met by Bernama cast doubt over the claim and believe that it is just a political gimmick to show that the party has a big membership.

They said the claim has yet to be proven via written record or the central leadership council (MPP) election where only about 10 percent of members voted.

Anuar Shaari, the former private secretary to PKR adviser Anwar Ibrahim, said no records of the membership were available until his resignation in May 2007.

"Former secretary-general (Salehuddin Hashim) never showed proof of membership and the same goes for the current secretary-general (Saifuddin Nasution Ismail). This is suspicious."

"If it has so many members, prove it. Of the MPP votes, Azmin Ali (deputy president candidate) received not even five percent."

Anuar said that if it is true that PKR has such big membership, the poor turnout showed that many members refrained from voting in a silent protest.

Azmin was elected deputy president defeating lone challenger Mustaffa Kamil Ayub after Zaid Ibrahim withdrew, claiming abuse of the election process.

Dr Wan Azizah Ismail was returned unopposed as president while daughter Nurul Izzah, the Lembah Pantai MP, was elected vice-president.

Pressure from several leaders

Asked why the poor MPP turnout compared to the annual divisional meetings, Anuar said the members were turned off by pressure from several leaders.

"Everything had been planned. Some leaders insisted and threatened members to ensure victory for their candidates."

ezam mohd noor at mca function 3Former PKR youth chief Ezam Mohd Nor who quit in 2006 said based on the membership claim, more should have voted for the MPP members.

"If it is true, the winning candidates would not have received such small percentage of the votes."

The senator did not dismiss possibility that the low turnout was due to manipulation by some leaders to meet the political end of certain individuals.

Political analyst Sivamurugan Pandian also shares similar sentiments and doubt that PKR has such a big membership.

"I am sure that the members would have voted. Another 90 percent of votes would have changed the election results.

"If it is true (PKR has 400,000 members), 90 percent make up the silent protest group," said the political science lecturer at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

- Bernama

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