

PAS: No to cooperation, yes to meetings
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PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang today said the party would not cooperate with Umno but it is open to meeting with any political parties, including its arch rival, on national interest issues.
MCPX

He told this to reporters after chairing a five-hour long party meeting at the PAS headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, which was attended by all party top guns.

This was a joint meeting between the party's central working committee and the majlis syura or religious scholars' consultative council headed by PAS spiritual leader Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

abdul hadi awang pc on pas umno talks 310708 "PAS rejects any form of cooperation with Umno and Barisan Nasional to form government whether at the federal or state levels," Hadi said at the onset of the five-minute press conference.

"That's why any offer from Umno to form a joint government is no longer an issue," he added.

'Committed to Pakatan'

However, Hadi revealed that it was decided at the meeting that the Islamic party will continue to be open to talks with various parties on national interest issues, but it will not confine this to just Umno.

"PAS is committed to Pakatan Rakyat and we will play an active and positive role in our common struggle including the struggle to reform the government," he said.

On that note, he also invited Umno parliamentarians to defect and join the Pakatan alliance.

Asked whether the party plans to take action against leaders who were involved in the secret talks with Umno, Hadi replied: "It's no longer secret. We can have meetings and the party will be informed on these meetings like what was done in the past."

Support for Anwar not affected

To another question, Hadi stressed that PAS' support for opposition figurehead Anwar Ibrahim was not affected despite the latter being embroiled in another sodomy allegation.

"I will defend whoever that is being victimised including Anwar," he stressed.

The party's decision on the talks with Umno comes amid speculation that the two rivals might bury the hatchet to either merge or form a power-sharing formula.

Nik Aziz, who had previously opposed talks with Umno, had said yesterday that his party would propose the implementation of the strict hudud and qisas laws - which allows for amputation of limbs and stoning to death - should the PAS-Umno merger become a reality.

He earlier also suggested that Umno and PAS should be dissolved and a new party based on Islam be formed to unite the Malays. PAS muktamar Aug 13-17

Also present at the press conference were PAS secretary-general Kamaruddin Jaffar and women's chief Nuridah Salleh.

Kamaruddin announced that the party's annual general assembly or the muktamar will be held in Ipoh, Perak this year from Aug 15-17.

The Youth and Women's wings meet will be held on Aug 13 and 14.

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