

**Stay out of politics, PAS Youth tells army chief**  
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PAS Youth today issued a firm order to the Armed Forces chief general Abdul Aziz Zainal - stay out of politics!

The party told Abdul Aziz not to be involved in the current imbroglio between the Barisan Nasional parties over racial issues triggered by the Penang Umno leader Ahmad Ismail's outburst.

salahuddin ayub 02While the armed forces was right in monitoring the situation, "Pas Youth is against the armed forces extending its own hand into the matter", said its chief Salahuddin Ayub.

This was because the armed forces' intervention in the war of words between BN leaders could lead to it being used by Umno for the sake of its political survival, he said.

"Rumours that the armed forces will intervene should there be a change of power from BN to Pakatan Rakyat are widespread. Umno is purposefully stoking racial tensions as it did in 1987 as an excuse to arrest opposition leaders.

"In tense situations such as this, the armed forces should stay out - not voice out as if to confirm rumours that it will take over in the event (the) Barisan (government) collapses," said Salahuddin in a statement.

"PAS Youth hopes that democracy can be upheld, because we do not want what happened in Thailand to happen here," he added, referring to the Thai military's deposition of its former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and its year-long hold on power in the country.

The Ahmad Ismail-'racial slur' controversy erupted when it was reported that Penang Umno's Bukit Bendera division leader Ahmad questioned the Chinese community's calls for equality given its 'immigrant' status.

Ahmad was also said to have questioned the Chinese' willingness to share and distribute their wealth equally with the other races.

This drew flak from various quarters, especially from BN component parties, who then pressured the Umno leadership to act against Ahmad.

### **The military's stand**

general abdul aziz zainalYesterday, the armed forces' Abdul Aziz added his voice to the debacle and, departing from the norm, reminded the government of the dangers of allowing racial issues to exacerbate.

Categorising it as a security threat, he called on the authorities to take stern action against those who stoke racial sentiments.

He warned that racial issues should not be raised as it had the potential to create chaos and disorder.

"Racial issues are the most feared by security forces as they could lead to chaos. They are a security threat," he was quoted as saying.

Commenting on this, Salahuddin said the purported racial tensions was confined only to BN and does not involve the leaders or supports of Pakatan.

"When Umno becomes desperate, it digs up racial issues to the point of calling for BN component parties to leave the coalition.

"Other parties, on the other hand, take advantage by blaming Umno for its racism. This is what has led to the racial crisis in this country," he said.

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