

Zaid quits race for No. 2 and all party posts
Malaysianmirror.com
08 November 2010

KUALA LUMPUR — The race for the Parti Keadilan Rakyat deputy presidency is all but over. FT PKR chief Zaid Ibrahim has dropped a 'double whammy' - quitting the race and all party posts.

The maverick politician has alleged that the party leadership "actively condones malpractices" and there have been "electoral fraud" in the deputy presidency election.

The shock announcement Monday morning came in a media statement: "I wish to announce my withdrawal as a candidate from the contest of deputy president of Parti Keadilan Rakyat and my resignation from all posts held in the party.

"I was offered to join this party under the belief that I could promote enlightened and progressive politics; nurture and develop principled political values and culture that I consider indispensable to the development of democracy and good governance in this country. I was mistaken."

Zaid was reportedly giving vice-president Azmin Ali a stiff fight in the the ongoing party elections although the later was leading in the race. Azmin is said to enjoy the support of de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim.

According to The Malaysian Insider, Zaid and fellow deputy presidential hopeful Mustafa Kamil Ayub had asked for a halt in the party's first direct elections, citing irregularities including the latest claims that ballot papers were available outside the polling process for possible manipulation of results.

However, party secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail has denied the claims, citing five security features but he did not explain how the ballot papers were made available to outsiders.

It appears that this was the last straw for Zaid who was the former de facto law minister in the Abdullah administration in 2008 before he quit over the detention of DAP's Teresa Kok, blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin and journalist Tan Hoon Cheng under the Internal Security Act.

Zaid, who was Kota Baru MP, was eventually sacked by Umno and he later joined PKR. He was PKR's candidate in the Hulu Selangor by-election last April but failed to defend the federal seat.

In his media statement, Zaid also said: "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.

"I have made this decision because there is 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," he added.

Zaid thanked all the members who had supported him, saying he was disappointed not

being able to continue in "this flawed election process" but he added that he would remain committed to the Opposition's cause and would speak about the issues of the common people.

"Together, we will continue our unabated struggle towards a better government for the people," he said.

In a parting shot, Zaid said: "Finally, I hope those adoring fans of Anwar Ibrahim will no longer regard me as a 'spoiler' standing in the way of their march to Putrajaya. I wish them well.

The PKR deputy presidency election came about following the announcement by incumbent Senator Dr Syed Husin Ali that he would not defend his post.

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