

Don't blindly utter fatwa, Penang mufti tells politicians

KUALA LUMPUR: Politicians should refrain from issuing fatwas (formal rulings of Islamic law) as they do not have the authority in the field, said Penang Mufti Datuk Seri Dr Wan Salim Wan Mohd Noor.

In response to Perikatan Nasional chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's alleged remarks that it was haram to vote for Pakatan Harapan in the upcoming Pulau parliamentary by-election, Wan Salim said such remarks could lead to confusion among the people.

"That is not how a fatwa works. How can someone issue a haram fatwa as such?"

"He (Muhyiddin) also did not state why it was haram (to vote for the candidate) in the first place.

"This is why we need to understand that there is a reason behind the haram concept in Islam and it is only because it

brings harm to us (Muslims).

"Hence, politicians must bear in mind not to simply utter a fatwa.

"This is a democratic country and it is up to the constituents to choose who to vote for," he told the *New Straits Times*.

On Sunday, Muhyiddin allegedly said that it was haram to vote for PH candidate Suhaizan Kaiat in the Pulau parliamentary by-election on Sept 9.

He claimed that not voting for Suhaizan was necessary to show the opposition the anger of the voters in the Pulau constituency over the lack of aid given by the unity government to the people during difficult times.

The remarks made by the Pagoh member of parliament were met with criticism, including from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who said the opposition's campaigning was excessive.



Datuk Seri Dr Wan Salim Wan Mohd Noor

Wan Salim also urged the people not to be easily influenced by any fatwa that was blindly uttered by any party.

"We need to understand that even though a fatwa or Islamic

remarks are being made (by certain quarters), it does not bind the Muslims unless it is approved (by the government or the sultan as the head of Islam).

"Hence, I hope the people can use their wisdom and not be influenced by matters that are not related to fatwas."

Bernamea reported that Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar had advised those involved in the by-election to refrain from engaging in campaigns that manipulate religious and racial sentiments.

As an institution responsible for protecting the sanctity of Islam in the country, he said the Prime Minister's Department was concerned about certain groups making statements condemning those with differing beliefs.

"This situation will divide and

threaten the security of the nation," he said yesterday.

"This matter can lead to misunderstandings within the community and tarnish the sanctity of Islamic teachings," he said.

Na'im said the term haram, according to the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka dictionary, could mean the prohibition law (in Islam), prohibited, cannot be done with uncertain matters, truly, even a little, and none at all.

"However, people associate the term 'haram' with Syariah law, which is the law of prohibition (in Islam) that promises rewards for those who obey it and punishment for those who violate it.

"I call on all parties to be responsible in respecting the sanctity of Islam, preserving the unity and peace of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious society in this country," he said.