

'DON'T ABUSE ISLAM, SYARIAH'

Religious expert says sinful to issue fatwa in full ignorance; analysts fear it will have negative implications

AMALIA AZMI
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

A RELIGIOUS studies expert and analysts have criticised certain politicians and political parties

who abuse Islam and syariah for their own gain.

Islamic studies expert Dr Abu Hafiz Salleh Hudin said no political party should use or abuse syariah for their own benefit.

He said it was unacceptable to use fatwa as political expediency and to threaten Malays and Muslims regarding their voting choices.

"Islam is a guide for them in the political arena but not to be abused to get votes.

"It is sinful to issue or make a fatwa or ruling in full ignorance without any references to Quranic text or prophetic tradition," said the lecturer from International Islamic University Malaysia's (IIUM) Department of Quran and Sunnah yesterday.

Hafiz also advised political parties to stop abusing Islamic rules, regulations and fatwa.

He was commenting on Perikatan Nasional chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's recent "fatwa" declaring that it was



Perikatan Nasional chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin giving a speech at the Perikatan Nasional 'ceramah' in Dataran Utama Kempas near Johor Baru on Saturday, where he issued a fatwa against voting for the Pakatan Harapan candidate in Pulai. PIC BY NUR AISYAH MAZALAN

haram for Malays to vote for Suhaizan Kaiat, who is Pakatan Harapan's candidate for the Pulai parliamentary by-election this Saturday.

Muhyiddin reportedly made the statement at a PN ceramah in Dataran Utama Kempas near Johor Baru last Saturday.

Meanwhile, analysts said attempting to gain political advantage by decreeing fatwa was a game all too often played by politicians.

Nusantara Academy for Strategic Research senior fellow Dr Azmi Hassan echoed Abu Hafiz's views in urging political leaders to refrain from using religion for their own interests, stressing that only fatwa committees had the right to issue edicts.

He said even though Muhyiddin had knowledge of Islam, he should not have issued the fatwa.

"Out of all people, it (the fatwa) should not have come from Muhyiddin because he very well knows this is not right.

"I think he is silly. He is too low (in political ranks) to gain political mileage in this case," he said.

Furthermore, Azmi said if leaders from PH, including Parti Amanah Negara, as well as Umno were to start using religion to gain political advantage, the backlash would be even more widespread, potentially leading to a total fiasco in the country.

He said the use of religion to win votes had very negative implications.

He also called for the authorities to put a stop to politicians exploiting religious sentiments, warning that if left unchecked, this could become a prevalent tactic.

Political analyst Mujibu Abd Muis said it was totally misleading to issue fatwa in a ceramah to attract Malay voters.

He said the Malays might take the fatwa more seriously than other terminologies.

Mujibu called for serious attention to address this issue as it appeared to have become out of control.

"Riding on religious sentiments for political advantage must be stopped and a clear line should be made between religion and politics.

"It is dividing the nation and may lead to extremism," he said.



Abu Hafiz Salleh Hudin



Mujibu Abd Muis