

PAS veering away from Islamic agenda, Nasharudin tells Berita Minggu
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 18 — As speculation continues to build over his possible departure from PAS, an embattled Nasharudin Mat Isa has broken his silence and accused the party of deviating from its Islamic principles and agenda.

In an exclusive interview with the weekend edition of Berita Harian, Berita Minggu, Nasharudin said that the PAS leadership should not be too preoccupied with the party's political goals while abandoning its Islamic ones.

He (picture) lamented that PAS was no longer seen as having a "consistent" Islamic image and that it could not afford to chop and change "terminologies" to suit its political direction.

"As an Islamic organisation, PAS has to be consistent with an Islamic face. Do not abandon the party's principles based on Al-Quran and Hadith over the issue of 'maqasid' (goals) and 'maslahah' (problems).

"Politics is coloured by perception and this has to be dealt with carefully. The general perception right now is that PAS is 'loose' in several aspects, which is dangerous," he said.

The Bachok MP, who was PAS deputy president until he was defeated by his successor Mohamad Sabu recently, said that PAS could not afford to become too "flexible" to the point where the rights of Islam and the Malay community are disregarded.

He echoed the controversial views of Datuk Dr Hasan Ali, who is under fire for re-igniting talk of a PAS-Umno union.

"Our focus should be unity because that is the main necessity. The country's future, the Malays and Islam hinge on how united we are, especially Malays and Muslims as the majority race.

"The issue of unity must be fought for regardless of political ideologies," said Nasharudin.

He said that there was a new political perception within PAS, that the party no longer keeps its internal matters under wraps.

In reference to news that he and Hasan would be dropped as election candidates, Nasharudin said that such remarks by "some leaders" only inflicted more confusion and discord onto PAS.

"This is not for them to decide, it is for the president (Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang) to. What's more, he was shocked to discover there were people determining who would contest and who would not.

"This has led to PAS being attacked from all sides, including from within the party."

He said the party leadership should not be talking about internal matters "openly", and that the president should be the only one making any formal announcements.

"There might now be an 'overtly creative' group which wants to go against PAS' traditional practice.

"Like it or not, PAS' traditions must be observed ... we can change but not to the extent that we become the targets of both our friends and foes," he added.

"My faith and loyalty will always be with PAS," said Nasharudin towards the end of the interview.

The Malaysian Insider understands that Nasharudin has not attended any central committee meetings despite his appointment as head of the international affairs sub-committee. The sub-committee is now led by its deputy chairman, Datuk Kamaruddin Jaafar.

The PAS leadership has started to explain its stand to party members over top leaders Nasharudin and Hasan's move to edge closer to Umno, believing the duo could defect to the ruling Malay party before the next general election.

The party's information unit has prepared a 30-minute video clip of secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali explaining the background and the circumstances that have led to both Nasharudin and Hasan expressing support for unity talks with Umno.

PAS has flatly refused to entertain the idea of a union between the two parties since Election 2008.

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