

**Utusan says PAS leaders are worse than cult leaders like Ayah Pin**  
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**By Melissa Chi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 — Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia's weekend edition compared today PAS leaders with Ayah Pin, saying their approach towards Islam will harm the religion and is more dangerous than the cult leader.

Writing as Awang Selamat, a pseudonym used by the Umno-owned daily's editors, the *Mingguan Malaysia* lauded state executive councillor Datuk Hassan Ali and PAS Youth chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi for defending the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) over a church raid, but compared the rest with the leader of the deviant sect.

"The question is when will other PAS leaders rise up from being trapped in the political game that hurts Islam? When DAP leaders unite in defending their religion, PAS is divisive. In fact the sadder part is when the main PAS leaders had bowed down to letting Islam to be threatened just for vote counts and the elections.

"As if their 'kiblat' is DAP, and their beloved is Lim Kit Siang and their religion is pluralism. Their approach will harm Islam and is more dangerous than cult leaders like Ayah Pin," Awang said.

Ayah Pin, or Ariffin Mohammed, is the leader of the Sky Kingdom cult which was demolished by the government in August 2005.

"Never before in PAS history is seen to be more confused, afraid of the non-Islam party influence and is willing to sell religion for politics," Awang said.

PAS had finally declared its official stand yesterday on the recent church raid in Petaling Jaya, saying Jais must take immediate action if it finds proof that Christians were proselytising to Muslims there.

Deputy president Mohamad Sabu said PAS's political bureau had held a meeting yesterday to finalise its stand on the issue, adding that its decision is in accordance with PAS's position as a party founded on Islamic principles.

Mohamad added that under no circumstances would PAS leaders ever compromise on matters involving threats to Islam.

However, when asked if this meant that the party condones the controversial raid on the Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC), PAS vice-president Salahuddin Ayub, who was also present, shook his head and said "no".

PAS leaders had earlier appeared split on the matter when news of the raid hit the headlines. The party's more hardline faction had backed Jais in the incident, with state executive councillor Hassan explaining that the department was acting on a complaint that Muslims were being courted to convert by Christians at the church.

But Shah Alam MP Khalid Samad, who has crossed swords previously over other religious matters with Hassan, disagreed, saying Hassan's view did not reflect that of the party's.

The Umno mouthpiece said the strong stance by Hassan and Nasrudin who had loudly defended Jais' actions in the name of protecting the sanctity of Islam, should be praised and said it is thankful that they had dared to "fight the current", putting the interest of religion above politics.

"They themselves are victims of attacks by leaders PAS members, especially the pro-Anwar Ibrahim group or the 'Anwarinas', who take the stance similar to DAP's. Under PAS' pressure, Hassan Ali said he is willing to lose his position that to sacrifice his religion. Nasrudin on the other had had openly said through his blog the ask from Allah SWT to give him strength to face challenges, especially internal pressure.

"I am touched by their bravery and hopefully Allah will give them strength. The same goes to the call by PAS Youth deputy chief Nik Abduh Nik Abdul Aziz who wants Malay leaders to unite, not 'melatah' in saving the Islamic faith," Awang said.

The Malay newspaper said in the Jais issue, it is "obvious" that the government in Selangor failed to handle it according to the spirit of the Constitution.

"It is clear that Selangor Mentri Besar Khalid Ibrahim for the umpteenth time, failed to protect the interest of Islam. He only follows the instructions of DAP leaders. What a coward," Awang said ending the editorial.

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