

Mahfuz: Perkasa 'admits' PAS role in defending Islam
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 15 — Perkasa's stated goal of supplanting PAS as the defenders of Islam amounts to a clear "admission" that Umno has not been defending the faith all this while, PAS has said.

"Because if Umno had been defending Islam then Perkasa would have said it will replace Umno," PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar told The Malaysian Insider today.

He said the Malay rights group's statement was tantamount to an "endorsement" of PAS's work to uphold Islamic principles but stressed that the right to defend Islam was not at all exclusive and that parties who wished to do so could.

Perkasa president Datuk Ibrahim Ali said yesterday his group would take over PAS's role as defenders of Islam after accusing the Islamist party of failing in its own objective to uphold Islamic principles.

He slammed PAS for what he said was weakness when dealing with Islamic matters and accused it of abandoning its values for political expediency.

"From today on, Perkasa has taken over PAS's duty as defenders of Islam. PAS is no longer an Islamic party as we have decided to take over all issues related to the religion," he had told reporters.

Ibrahim cited PAS spiritual adviser Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's support for the Penang Fatwa Committee's edict barring mosques from using loudspeakers to broadcast Quran recitals and the morning call to prayer, claiming this showed the religious leader no longer had "the heart" for religious affairs.

He said Muslims in Malaysia have never complained about the practices of other religions, naming the kavadi procession during Thaipusam or the use of loud bells at Hindu mosques or Buddhist temples as examples.

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