

**PAS says Reds heroes before Merdeka but not after**  
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**By Yow Hong Chieh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 31 — PAS moved to contain the fallout from Mohamad Sabu's controversial comments on the Bukit Kepong Incident, with its information chief arguing that there was nothing wrong with calling communists "heroes" — but limited to their pre-Merdeka exploits.

Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man said that while anyone who fought the British colonial government before Merdeka — including the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) — should "logically" be called independence fighters, the same could not be said of communists who waged a guerrilla war against the Malaysian government after independence.

"In 1950, were the communists fighting against the colonialists or the country? Of course it was the British colonialists. That is the reality because the nation was not yet independent, so those they (CPM) fought against were the British government and those seen to be collaborating with the British to rule over Tanah Melayu," he said in a statement today.

"After Merdeka (in 1957), were the communists fighting against the colonialists or the country? Of course the legitimate nation chosen by the people that was free from British colonialism, and that was why they had to be opposed to the very end.

"But it must be remembered, this was Merdeka, a far cry from 1950 when they fought the British colonialists."

On Saturday, Utusan Malaysia quoted PAS deputy president Mohamad as saying that the communists who attacked the Bukit Kepong police station in 1950 during the pre-Independence communist insurgency were heroes.

The Umno-owned newspaper accused him of disparaging the country's armed forces and expressing support for communists but Mohamad, popularly known as Mat Sabu, has since denied the report and accused the Malay-language daily of fabricating the quote.

"Utusan lied... they made up stories about my speech," Mohamad told The Malaysian Insider.

"When I checked back and looked at the recording, the word 'communist' wasn't found in my speech," he said, adding that he will sue the newspaper.

Umno leaders have flayed Mohamad for allegedly backing the communists and dishonouring the memory of those in the security forces who sacrificed life and limb to contain the CPM threat.

Tuan Ibrahim (picture) also stressed today that the contributions of Datuk Onn Jaafar, Tunku Abdul Rahman and other nationalists who negotiated with the British for independence were not in question despite their having worked for the colonial government prior to Merdeka.

But he said there needed to be a more honest interpretation of history, pointing out that the question of PAS supporting communists should not arise if all parties studied history without

prejudice.

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