

**Utusan wants PAS snubbed over purported communism support**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 3 — Umno's Utusan Malaysia urged all parties today to reject PAS for purportedly glorifying communist guerrillas, saying it was "enough" that the Islamist party exploits religion to gain political mileage.

Continuing its warfare against the opposition party, the Malay daily said in a column by its editors that PAS's top leaders were attempting to seek popularity by standing by deputy president Mohamad Sabu's reference to Mat Indera as a "hero" and a freedom fighter.

Mohamad, more popularly known as Mat Sabu, had reportedly described as heroes those who attacked the Bukit Kepong police station during the pre-independence communist insurgency in 1950.

Mohamad Sabu accused Umno yesterday of attempting to distract the public from current issues by labelling him a "communist sympathiser". — file pic

"The act of endorsing the struggles of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) by twisting historical facts is irresponsible and should be rejected by all parties who understand clearly the violence and cruelty of the guerrilla forces then," the Malay daily's editors wrote today under the pseudonym Awang Selamat.

"As such, Awang would like to advise PAS, it is enough to try and exploit religion for political gains, to a point they even revere MCP for the sake of seeking power," Awang continued.

Calling himself "sad", Awang said he could not fathom what was in the minds of PAS leaders when they chose to support Mat Sabu's statements.

Utusan Malaysia had carried a report on his ceramah speech last Saturday and accused him of disparaging the country's armed forces and expressing support for communists.

PAS and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders have since backed Mat Sabu, who himself has denied the report and threatened to sue the newspaper.

He also pointed out yesterday that Mat Indera, one of the individuals he praised in his ceramah on August 21, had been recognised as a freedom fighter by Umno-controlled Berita Harian on August 13, 2010.

But Awang said such a move had not only hurt the Malays but all races in the country.

"Awang was not surprised with PAS's stand in supporting the MCP when its top leaders chose to support Mat Sabu's statement on the Bukit Kepong tragedy.

"But what I am sure of is that whatever PAS does is for political reasons," the daily said.

Mohamad Sabu accused Umno yesterday of attempting to distract the public from current issues such as electoral fraud and inflation by attacking him and labelling him a "communist sympathiser".

"The issue of communism has been purposely raised by Umno's newspaper to divert the attention of the public away from electoral reforms and inflation," he said in a statement.

Mohamad's statements echo that of his PR colleagues who earlier accused Umno of rewriting history to ensure that the senior partner in the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) takes sole credit for the independence struggle.

But the federal opposition has also admitted that Mohamad's comments had allowed Umno a reprieve after being on the backfoot for months following record levels of inflation and the July 9 Bersih rally which saw tens of thousands pouring into the capital demanding for free and fair elections.

Utusan has targeted Mohamad since he was elected PAS deputy president in June with strident attacks of late in anticipation of snap polls within a year.

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