

**Government using hudud row as smokescreen, says PAS Youth**  
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**By Lisa J. Ariffin**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 25 — PAS Youth accused the government today of exploiting Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) apparent impasse over hudud laws to distract Malaysians from more serious issues affecting the administration.

"The government wants to make it an issue to mask other more important ones like the ISA and fake ICs," PAS youth chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi said today when approached by reporters at the Pakatan Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) Aidilfitri open house.

"Hudud is not the issue; it should not be made an issue. It is part of Islam. It should be understood and discussed by all Muslims but discussed in a proper and detailed manner," he added.

Nasrudin Hassan said as an Islamic party, PAS hopes to see the implementation of the Islamic penal laws.

He added that non-Muslims should not fear hudud, as its laws only applied to Muslims.

"This is for Muslims," he said.

Hudud is a prickly subject in multicultural Malaysia where race and religion are closely linked.

The issue is raised cyclically as political fodder as its divisive nature often causes conflicts to occur within otherwise-friendly circles, making it an ideal tactic to pit parties with opposing ideologies against one another.

PR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said last week that he backs hudud in Kelantan, saying it does not infringe on non-Muslims' rights and causing the dispute to escalate further.

Anwar also moved yesterday to rebuke Barisan Nasional (BN) for purportedly exploiting hudud to gain political traction as national polls nears.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday pledged that his administration would block any attempt to implement the Islamic penal law, in a bid to curtail further debate on the fractious subject.

Najib's deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, however, expressed support for hudud earlier this week, upsetting Umno's Chinese partner, MCA.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has threatened withdraw his party from the ruling coalition if senior ally, Umno, goes ahead with enforcing hudud. Gerakan has also expressed the same threat.

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