

**Pakatan to work out 'hudud' consensus next week**  
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**By Lisa J. Ariffin**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 25 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) is resolved to end the ongoing squabble over PAS's hudud laws initiative during its leadership council meeting on Wednesday.

PR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim agreed today that the pact's three parties require a consensus over the sensitive issue, which has seen DAP and PAS at loggerheads on numerous occasions prior to the formalisation of the present coalition.

He told reporters at PKR's open house here that the meeting was originally scheduled to discuss Budget 2012 to be tabled next month but the PR leadership had agreed to add the discussion on hudud to its agenda.

"This scheduled meeting is to discuss the budget, and also the issue made bigger by the media than it actually is," he said, referring to the controversial war over Islamic law which prescribes stoning, whipping and amputation as punishment for criminal offences.

Anwar (picture), however, stressed that the issue was not a new one, saying that PAS had always been clear on its stand.

"The view of PAS is also not new... (But) there must be consensus in PR... This is what we will talk about," he said.

DAP national chairman Karpal Singh, who has been openly critical of the plan to implement hudud laws, yesterday urged the PR leadership to convene an emergency meeting to discuss the matter.

"An emergency meeting must be held immediately to publicly clarify Pakatan's stand on the issue and the controversy must end, once and for all," he was quoted as saying on Bernama Online yesterday.

PAS has refused to back down from its plan, with its spiritual advisor Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat reported to have said DAP may leave the coalition if it refused to support the measure.

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 ideal to pit parties with opposing ideologies against one another.

Anwar backs hudud in Kelantan, saying it does not infringe upon non-Muslims' rights, further escalating the dispute.

The PR leader also moved yesterday to rebuke Nasional (BN) for purportedly exploiting hudud, or Islamic penal laws, to gain political support 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 Prime Minister 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 pull his party out of the ruling coalition if senior ally, Umno, goes ahead with enforcing hudud. Gerakan has expressed the same threat.

"We have to acknowledge the fact that as a Muslim, we must support (hudud laws) one hundred per cent. That's why I said I endorse that," Anwar said.

"But when you ask what about federal level? There must be consensus."

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