

Nik Aziz dares Najib to back hudud law
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 22 — Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat dismissed as laughable suggestions that Kelantan could now go ahead to implement hudud law in the state now that Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was no longer the prime minister.

Instead, he challenged Datuk Seri Najib Razak to withdraw any objections the federal government still had over Kelantan's longstanding plans to implement hudud.

Dr Mahathir, the former prime minister, had previously written to the Kelantan menteri besar to inform him that the state did not have a right to implement hudud, which prescribes stoning, whipping and amputation as punishment for criminal offences.

But in remarks released through his Facebook page today, Nik Aziz (picture) pointed out that the letter from Dr Mahathir remained valid.

"I have not heard of any policy whereby letters sent by a prime minister expires after that prime minister resigns.

"Do all matters expire and need to be renewed when there is a change of prime minister? Tun Mahathir's challenge is funny indeed," he said. Dr Mahathir quit as PM in 2003.

Dr Mahathir challenged Nik Aziz yesterday to implement hudud because he was no longer prime minister.

The former PM's remarks appear aimed at highlighting an issue that will almost certainly spark intense debate and rouse opposition from non-Muslims.

Since 2008 PAS and its Pakatan Rakyat allies, the DAP and PKR, have won over non-Muslim support, largely due to unhappiness with graft in government as well as policies seen as discriminatory to them.

The MCA, MIC and Gerakan, the three major non-Muslim Barisan Nasional (BN) parties, have been struggling to win back voters after losing record numbers of seats in the 2008 general election.

Dr Mahathir's remarks are also designed to place pressure on PAS, which has successfully gained support among more moderate Malaysians by appearing to place its stated aim of forming a theocratic Islamic state on the back-burner.

PAS has tried to project a more moderate and progressive image in recent years, and has recently introduced its own version of a welfare state as part of its manifesto ahead of the next general election.

PAS had tried unsuccessfully in the past to introduce hudud and other strict Islamic laws.

But these attempts have all failed because of the federal government's refusal to sanction

any vote on changes to the federal constitution.

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