

PAS non-Muslim chief rails against party again
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 16 — The head of PAS's non-Muslim wing has once again spoken out publicly against the party's leadership, this time over Kelantan's inability to attract foreign investment.

PAS Supporters Congress (PSC) chief Hu Pang Chaw warned yesterday that Kelantan would continue to lose investments to other, less bureaucratic states unless it cut the red tape currently stifling property transfers.

His latest remarks come hot on the heels of an earlier warning to PAS that it would alienate PSC members and non-Muslim voters in general if it enacted hudud law in Kelantan as planned.

Hu said 80-year-old Kelantan land laws — which require the state executive council to sign off on certain types of transfers — had slowed down project approvals and frustrated investors who were otherwise keen to put their money in the state.

"It (the land code) is outdated. Do you know when a non-Malay family or a Malay family not born in Kelantan wants to transfer land, you need the exco's approval?" he told The Malaysian Insider.

Hu, who worked in the state government from 2000 to 2004, cited several cases where multi-million ringgit industrial and housing projects took up to 10 years to complete because of this restriction and suggested the exco let the land office deal with minor applications instead.

"Don't you think that's too long for investment? I don't think any investor would be interested," he said.

He pointed out it was impossible for the exco to keep up with approval requests as the council could only endorse some 200 applications per month, compared to the 500 or so applications filed state-wide every day.

"You cannot catch up, so let the district do it ... and give them guidelines," he said.

The Kelantan government must appoint Chinese-speaking officers who know the state's development policy if it intends to take advantage of the ample investment opportunities on offer from China, Hu also said.

"I received complaints from the Chinese. They want to find out more about Kelantan but no one seems able to share any details with them," he lamented.

He added that he was not blaming the Kelantan government as PAS had done its best but said the state was adapting too slowly and had to move quickly to address shortcomings in the system.

Last week, Hu warned PAS any move to enact hudud law in Kelantan would drive non-Muslim members out of the party.

The PAS central committee has said it will call up Hu soon to explain certain statements he has made to the media which were not in line with party policy.

Kelantan PAS Youth chief Abdul Latiff Abdul Rahman has also told Hu not to threaten the state government or the party over the issue.

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