

PAS Youth must toe party line, says Mustafa
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 18 — PAS secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali insisted today that the party's Youth wing must abide by the party's stand on a gathering of a million Muslims.

The Pakatan Rakyat (PR) presidential council decided today that PAS's political bureau, which meets tonight, will determine if the Himpunan Sejuta Umat (Himpun) is a front for Umno to play the ethnic card ahead of a general election expected soon.

"They come under us. Whatever we decide they must follow," Mustafa (picture) told The Malaysian Insider after PR's press conference.

PAS Youth had pre-empted its central leadership and declared its support earlier today for the gathering in Stadium Shah Alam to stand up against the challenge of proselytisation by Christians.

PAS Youth chief Nasrudin Hassan said his members would offer the same support to Himpun, or a "Gathering of a Million Faithful", as it had for the Bersih 2.0 rally for free and fair elections on July 9.

The Malaysian Insider reported yesterday a planned gathering of a million Muslims this Saturday to rally against Christians "challenging the sovereignty of Islam", a momentous event that could raise religious tension that has intensified in recent months after alleged proselytising by Christians.

Himpun is being organised by various right-wing groups such as Perkasa with the backing of both Umno and PAS Youth in what appears to be a coming together of conservative Muslims.

About 1,000 Facebook users have confirmed their attendance so far but should Himpun draw much more this weekend, it could push Umno and PAS to seek relevance among more religious Malays.

With ethnic tensions already rising in the years following the 2008 general election, it could raise already simmering fears of Islamisation among non-Muslims and more liberal Malays

PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said at the press conference that his political bureau "will see if there is a political agenda" behind Himpun.

"Yes, you must defend the faith but you cannot be unjust to other faiths. Ethnic tension should not be heightened," the Maran MP said.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told reporters that PAS "will be at the forefront" of the issue and the coalition's final stand will be made after the Islamist party meets tonight.

"We are gathering info on whether there is Umno involvement. Are they really defending the faith?" the PKR de facto leader said.

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