

**PAS: Ties with communist nations show Umno's hypocrisy**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 31 — PAS accused Umno today of hypocrisy for claiming that Mohamad Sabu had glorified communists despite the ruling party fostering close ties with five communist nations.

Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Richard Riot told Parliament that Malaysia has benefited from bilateral relations with China, Cuba, Laos, Vietnam and North Korea.

But PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar (picture) said Umno had gone further by signing a memorandum of understanding with the Communist Party of China (CPC) on August 4 last year to begin a youth leadership exchange programme.

"This shows how close Umno is to the party that masterminded and supplied weapons to the Communist Party of Malaysia (CPM) including the Bukit Kepong incident," the Pokok Sena MP said in Parliament.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) has previously accused Datuk Seri Najib Razak of contradicting his own promise to improve civil liberties by charging PAS deputy president Mohamad for his Bukit Kepong tragedy remarks.

Mohamad, who is popularly known as Mat Sabu, was alleged to have defamed policemen and soldiers who defended the Bukit Kepong police station in a 1950 attack by communists that saw 25 policemen killed.

Umno's Utusan Malaysia had first accused the maverick politician of glorifying Ahmad Indera in an August 27 report that quoted Mohamad as saying that communist leader was a true hero.

The daily and Malay hardliners in Umno have repeatedly called for Mohamad to be charged over the comment with some even insisting that the PAS leader be stripped of his citizenship.

Mahfuz told reporters today that the Barisan Nasional government's close ties with communist countries "prove the attack on Mat Sabu is just a political plot to win Malay votes."

However, Riot insisted that these countries were only "interpreted as communist but their policies have changed. They are no longer closed door but open up to foreign countries."

Mohamad has denied glorifying communists, saying he never mentioned "communism" in his speech.

He was charged with criminal defamation just six days after Najib announced a raft of reforms last month to give Malaysians more freedom.

The charge of criminal defamation was also used in 2008 against controversial blogger Raja

Petra Kamarudin who claimed that Najib and his wife were involved in the murder of Mongolian woman Altantuya Shariibuu.

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