

**Aziz Bari: Umno inconsistent on scholars in politics**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**November 07, 2011**  
**By G. Manimaran**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 — Law professor Dr Abdul Aziz Bari called Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin biased today for criticising his involvement in politics, reminding the minister that Umno often directs lecturers to write its policy speeches.

But the International Islamic University (UIA) professor said he was willing to share his views with Umno leaders who were “willing to listen”.

He also pointed out his progressive views on political transformation were often similar to those of Khaled’s deputy, Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah, although they were not well-received by many in Umno.

“I welcome Umno members who are willing to listen.

“Although the minister does not agree with what I or his deputy, Saifuddin, has to say, I think I am only saying what is allowed under the Constitution and did not go against the Sedition Act,” he told The Malaysian Insider.

In a statement yesterday, Khaled advised Abdul Aziz to resign as an academician if he insists on speaking in the political arena.

The higher education minister had said Aziz, who is under investigation by three different parties including his employer, the International Islamic University (UIA), need not wait for the university’s decision.

Khaled added that a university is an institution that prioritises academic achievement and should be neutral in order to attain scholastic success.

In response, Abdul Aziz questioned the minister about scholars who prepared policy speeches for Umno presidents.

“What is his response to professors who publicly accuse DSAI (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim) of sodomy? What is his response to the professor who became a lecturer for the BTN (National Civics Bureau) and Islam Hadhari, all of which are Umno’s policy and politics?” he said in a statement to The Malaysian Insider today.

“Didn’t Umno give out party awards to a number of professors; doesn’t that mean they are politicising academic?”

Abdul Aziz added he had only touched on policies and politics in line with the Federal Constitution’s ideal and demands.

“If I am accused of politicking, I think we should just get rid of the Constitution and make this country a dictatorship or a one-party country,” the constitutional law expert said, stressing that, “I think what I do is still under the framework and idea often brought up by his deputy.”

Abdul Aziz added that Saifuddin, who is also an Umno Supreme Council member, had long

brought up similar ideas.

Pointing to a Court of Appeal ruling on Monday regarding the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA), Abdul Aziz said he believes Khaled was aware the decision has now negated the ban on students' involvement in politics.

"If students can be involved in politics, professors should be allowed to," he said.

He also said that he was not active in politics, saying that he merely gave his opinion to anyone who was willing to listen, before adding that he was prepared to appear on Umno's stage if the party could accept that.

In his statement yesterday, Khaled, who is also the Pasir Gudang MP, noted that Abdul Aziz had entered his constituency and gave a speech in Taman Saujana near Johor Baru, but said he was confident residents there were not receptive of the message.

Abdul Aziz had spoken at a rally organised by PKR, a Pakatan Rakyat partner.

It was not the first time Abdul Aziz had attended a rally or forum organised by opposition parties and non-governmental organisations.

Abdul Aziz courted controversy when he questioned the Selangor Sultan's ruling regarding the raid on Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) in August.

He is also being investigated by the police and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). The police and UIA investigations on the matter have already been completed.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/aziz-bari-umno-inconsistent-on-scholars-in-politics/>