

MCLM president quits, says undermined by RPK
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 2 — Haris Ibrahim resigned as president of the Malaysian Civil Liberties Movement (MCLM) today, accusing Raja Petra Kamarudin of undermining his efforts at ending Barisan Nasional's (BN) rule.

The self-exiled blogger, who is also MCLM chairman, told the New Straits Times in an interview published yesterday that the civil society movement would not contest the next general election.

Raja Petra was also reported by the Umno-controlled daily as saying "the Egypt-style people's revolution was not an answer for Malaysia due to the delicate racial balance. (Chinese voters) don't want Tahrir Square."

Today, Haris said Raja Petra unilaterally made the decision to stay away from the general election.

"I can confirm now that no such decision has been made after due consultation. In the circumstances, I find it impossible to continue to serve MCLM as its president," Haris wrote on his blog.

He said Raja Petra's comments "greatly undermine efforts I am making, albeit through MLCM, in the 'Anything But Umno (ABU)' initiative.

"It also saddens me that even as... many others continue daily to undo the ill-effects of Umno/BN's 40-over years of race-based, divide-and-rule, my friend should continue to see us as Malays, Chinese, Indians," he said.

The political activist said he informed Raja Petra, better known as RPK, of his resignation via email.

Raja Petra has come under fire from PKR after Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia quoted him yesterday as saying Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was morally unfit to become prime minister as Malaysians could not accept a homosexual leading the country.

The blogger, who fled the country in 2009 after alleging that Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife were responsible for the murder of Mongolian Altantuya Shariibuu, did not explicitly call Anwar a homosexual but said there was no room in Malaysia for someone who is gay and wants to become PM.

He also said he was "90 per cent" sure the man in the Datuk T sex video was Anwar, and that many of the latter's friends believed in the authenticity of the video.

Raja Petra had first mooted civil society as a third force in Malaysian politics in October

2010 when he told a forum in London that Pakatan Rakyat's huge gains in 2008 were due to the civil society action such as the Bersih and Hindraf rallies in 2007, which championed free and fair elections and lobbied for Indian rights respectively.

"We have given PR two-and-a-half years but not a single reform has been implemented," he had said, forcing Anwar to defend his coalition at the same event by laying blame on the federal government.

The Selangor royal family member had launched MCLM's Barisan Rakyat Independent Candidate Initiative in December 2010 and the movement began deploying its candidates last July.

MCLM also warned Najib that street protests would follow if the prime minister called for a general election without first implementing the electoral reforms demanded by the Bersih 2.0 election watchdog movement.

"I wish to reiterate here that this was no idle threat," Haris wrote today.

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