

Hasan says will back 'third force' for Malay-Muslim unity
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By Yow Hong Chieh

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 22 — Datuk Hasan Ali says he will support any political "third force" if it can unite Malays and defend Islam, following his sacking from PAS a fortnight ago.

The former Selangor PAS chief, who was axed for breaching party discipline, told Utusan Malaysia today he would back any effort to create a viable alternative for Muslims tired of the current political status quo.

Hasan said it is crucial to make Islam the platform for political change as it is the sole way to ensure unity of the Malay community. — file pic

"All parties whose members are majority Muslim should return to Allah and the Prophet (Muhammad). Glorifying Allah and the Prophet...should be the goal of every Muslim," he told the Umno-owned daily.

"If there's a third force that adopts this as the core of its struggle, I'm confident Malay unity can be fostered. Without a doubt, my friends and I will make this third force the best choice in our efforts to uphold Islam."

Hasan said it is crucial to make Islam the platform for political change as it is the sole way to ensure unity of the Malay community, which remains "fractured" despite repeated attempts to bring the different factions together.

No other ideology, whether socialist, pluralist, liberalist, secularist, nationalist or Islamist, would lead to success, the former Selangor executive committee member in charge of Islamic affairs said.

He also urged Malays and Muslims to hold fast to the principles of Islam and to seek in their leaders the qualities of true Muslim leadership, which he said must demonstrate impeccable morals, good education as well as an "Islamic track record" that can be emulated by all.

"It's high time such leaders are given priority and made the best choice for Malay-Muslims in this country," he said.

PAS should return to its original struggle to uphold Islam and eject the "parasites" which have caused the party to deviate from its path, Hasan added.

The maverick PAS veteran was sacked from the party earlier this month for urging opposition supporters to steer clear of the January 9 rally in support of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the latter's sodomy trial verdict was handed down.

Hasan was also removed as the Selangor executive committee member in charge of Islamic affairs.

The portfolio was taken over by Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim, who appointed Ahmad Yunus Hairi to take Hasan's place on the committee.

Berita Harian has criticised Khalid's move as "a slap in the face" to PAS, which had many clerics who were better qualified to take up the Islamic affairs portfolio.

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