

PAS points out Umno MBs also take charge of Islamic affairs
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 27 — Selangor PAS defended today Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim's move to take over Islamic affairs in the state, pointing out that mentris besar in Umno-controlled states were "automatically made Islamic affairs excos without having religious backgrounds."

Khalid (picture) has come under fire from Umno-controlled media as well as Malay rights NGO Perkasa after taking over the portfolio which is usually held by PAS in states controlled by Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

Perkasa warned last weekend of renewed efforts by Christian groups to convert Muslims in Selangor as the mentri besar lacks religious credentials unlike "Muslim warrior" Datuk Hasan Ali who was sacked from PAS and his executive council seat early this month.

"Has Perkasa overlooked states under Umno? Their MBs become automatic Islamic affairs exco but they don't have basic religious teaching," Selangor PAS chief Dr Abd Rani Osman said, citing Pahang Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob as an example.

The Meru assemblyman told a press conference that "Tan Sri Khalid has said if he needs advice, he will refer to us so it is untrue that he will act against Islam."

Selangor PAS deputy chief Khalid Samad also said that the Sultan had agreed to the executive council reshuffle.

"So does (Perkasa president) Datuk Ibrahim Ali feel the Sultan is wrong?" he said.

Selangor PAS leaders had called the press conference today to declare their full support for the recent executive council reshuffle which saw Dr Yunus Hairi being sworn in to replace Hasan despite earlier stating that Dr Rani was the only candidate it had proposed.

Reading from a prepared statement on behalf of Selangor PAS, Youth chief Hasbullah Ridhwan said Dr Rani "was referred to and involved in all decisions made by the mentri besar."

"Dr Rani has just taken over as Selangor PAS commissioner and believes focus should be given to preparing to face the 13th general election. Dr Rani is aware that his appointment as commissioner is to improve PAS's performance in the election and not for him to occupy positions such as in the exco," the statement said.

Hasan, a former Selangor PAS commissioner, gained notoriety last year for backing the Selangor Islamic department's (JAIS) raid of a church over apostasy claims.

Weeks before Hasan was dropped as state executive councillor this month, he was spotted taking part in pub raids by religious authorities.

Like Perkasa, Hasan has consistently claimed there is a movement to convert Muslims to Christianity.

He was axed from PAS after urging opposition supporters to avoid the rally on January 9 in support of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on the day his sodomy trial verdict was handed down by the High Court here.

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