

**Umno tactics scaring Malay votes from Pakatan, says PAS research chief**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 16 — The majority the Malay votes are being scared off from Pakatan Rakyat (PR) due to Umno's "alarmist tactics of using the threat of Christianisation against Islam" and cash handouts to low-income households, most of whom are Malays, said a PAS policy wonk last night.

Kuala Selangor MP Dzulkefly Ahmad (picture) told a forum his Islamist party was "finding the Malay vote a big challenge", saying this could lead to a weak PR federal government if Malay MPs are in the minority in the pre-dominantly Malay country.

"Politics in Malaysia is in transition. PR will bring real Islamic governance but people don't understand it. Malays prefer the devil they know in Umno, even if they know it is corrupt than the angel that is PAS because they fear having non-Malays in power.

"I hope it will not come to that," the executive director of PAS's research bureau said when quizzed over whether PR could takeover Putrajaya without Malays making up the majority of its federal lawmakers.

"It will be very difficult and sad. So the Malay vote will decide if PR can have the balance to continue on a powerful political trajectory," he told the forum titled "Analysis of the Post GE-13 Political Direction".

Despite winning 82 federal seats in Election 2008, defections have cut PR down to 76 MPs with exactly half of them being Malays.

In the peninsula, there were 51 non-Malay majority seats in the last election and another 44 seats with Malays making up more than half but less than two-thirds of the electorate. Another 10 non-Bumiputera majority seats are in Sabah and Sarawak.

Most parties in Malaysia tend to run non-Malay candidates in these areas.

A recent survey by independent pollsters Merdeka Center found that Datuk Seri Najib Razak's popularity had surged by 10 percentage points to 69 per cent on the back of nearly three-quarters of Malays supporting the prime minister.

The Umno president had appeared to tell some 400 delegates at a gathering of Islamic scholars and writers that a vote for PAS was a vote for the DAP.

"Even if we vote for that faction, it is the one who sleeps in the same bed with them that will profit," he said during his luncheon address, adding that he hoped online writers would get his meaning.

Umno leaders including deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and its media have also accused PR of being anti-Malay, anti-Islam and agents of Christianisation.

Its Malay daily Utusan Malaysia has also alleged that the DAP is conspiring with the church to establish a Christian state led by a Christian prime minister.

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