

No top posts for non-Muslims in PAS, says Hadi
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 — Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang has shut the door on the suggestion non-Muslims be allowed to hold senior posts in PAS as it goes against the Islamic party's constitution.

"It makes no sense for a non-Muslim to hold a high position such as vice-president in PAS because this is an Islamic country.

"In a communist country, would anyone appoint a non-communist as leader? They (non-Muslims) cannot be appointed to a high post and this is our stance," the PAS president was quoted by the News Straits Times today as saying.

But he added that non-Muslims with the other Pakatan Rakyat component parties could hold ministerial posts if the opposition pact were to take over Putrajaya.

Abdul Hadi's (picture) remarks come as a response to PAS research chief Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad claiming the party was ready to accept non-Muslims in positions as senior as deputy president.

The Kuala Selangor MP said the party was prepared to emulate Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), which appointed Coptic Christian intellectual Rafiq Habib as its vice-president last year.

Dzulkefly said such a move was not against Islam and was "only an administrative matter" that was allowed because "Islam can address change for intellectual renewal. Islam can withstand the challenge of time."

His statement came under immediate fire from other party leaders such as Youth chief Nasrudin Hassan Tantawi, Ulama Council chief Datuk Haron Taib as well as sacked former Selangor PAS chief Datuk Hasan Ali.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who constantly tussled with PAS over Islamic issues during his 22 years in power, also mocked the party, calling on them to appoint DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang as president.

PAS secretary general Datuk Mustafa Ali said earlier this month Dzulkefly's statement was theoretical in nature and difficult to implement right now.

"I feel PAS should just hold on to what we have now. If non-Muslims are interested, they can table it through the PAS supporters' wing," Sinar Harian quoted him as saying.

However, Mustafa added that while the party constitution barred non-Muslims from leading the party, he could not rule out such a development in the future.

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