

PAS courts ex-government strongmen as polls loom
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 — PAS has embarked on a campaign to recruit key establishment figures in the hope that the individuals can help shore up voter support ahead of the 13th general election.

The Malaysian Insider understands the Islamist party is making efforts to woo former Bukit Aman commercial crimes investigation (CCID) chief Datuk Ramli Yusoff as well as ex-Umno supreme council member Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir into contesting as a PAS candidate in the next general election.

Ramli has consistently pressured the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government to set up a tribunal to investigate claims of abuse of power against the Attorney-General, while Abdul Kadir quit Umno last month shortly after joining the newly-formed Angkatan Amanah Merdeka (Amanah).

Both have been vocal and critical of the present BN government under Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

PAS leaders who spoke to The Malaysian Insider confirmed that “overtures” and informal “invitations” had been made to the two with regards to joining PAS, but neither Abdul Kadir nor Ramli have made a decision over the matter.

“They are among names which have been mentioned, but there has not been any decision as of yet,” PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu said.

PAS research chief Dzulkefly Ahmad said a future entry of the two into the party would serve a purpose, as they would be able to provide a detailed description of the kinds of crimes committed by the BN government in the past.

“They are from the system. These are the people who are now critical of the systems, having previously been proponents of it. Having seen its flaws, they are willing to come out in the open to demonise the same system,” he told The Malaysian Insider.

“They are the perfect example of people who were part of the corrupted BN model, who can no longer tolerate BN’s ways and are now wanting better governance,” said the PAS man.

But Dzulkefly said he did not discount the possibility that the two might be viewed as “has-beens”, owing to their age and former service for the government.

“In all fairness they should be judged for what they are now, what they are saying,” said the Kuala Selangor MP.

PAS vice-president Salahuddin Ayub was quoted by an online portal yesterday as saying that the Islamist party would field Ramli as a candidate in the next GE.

But when contacted, the Kubang Kerian MP stressed that Ramli has not yet given any commitment to any political party.

"I met him (Ramli) for tea a few days ago... the question was asked, but he did not give an indication yet.

"Wait and see, wait and see," Salahuddin told The Malaysian Insider.

Abdul Kadir confirmed that both PAS and PKR had "suggested" that he join either party before the national polls, but said that he "had not decided" on joining a political party as of yet.

The former federal minister said that he has attended one PAS ceramah so far as a guest speaker, and will continue to attend Pakatan Rakyat (PR) ceramahs and programmes.

"I have a lot of spare time, so I can attend these ceramahs, talks," he added.

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