

Pensioners joining PAS because of Islam, says party veep
Malaysian Insider
July 15, 2012
By Amin Iskandar

KUALA LUMPUR, July 15 — PAS believes retired government officials are joining as members because the Islamist party fights for the religion but an analyst said others have joined Umno without any publicity, reflecting the crucial role of the civil service vote in the next general elections.

Putrajaya employs nearly 1.4 million people nationwide while another 500,000 are pensioners in a civil service dominated mainly by Malays, who form 60 per cent of the country's population. Islam is the country's official religion and all Malays must be Muslims.

PAS vice president Salahuddin Ayub said only PAS has been consistent in fighting for Islamic principles in Malaysia and this is why many pensioners are attracted to join the party.

"Islam is a religion that has compatibility with human nature. Human nature favours the truth. Whoever it is, whether they are pensioners or ex-policemen, have the nature to be together with Islam and the truth," Salahuddin told The Malaysian Insider.

A recent trend in Malaysian politics has seen Muslim pensioners, including high-ranking officers such as former secretary-generals, ex-envoys and those from the police and armed forces joining PAS after the end of their service.

Among them are former CID chief Datuk Fauzi Shaari, who gave his membership form to party president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang in a ceremony to welcome him.

But a political analyst from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) disagrees that there is a trend among former high-ranking government officials to join opposition parties like PAS.

"If it's said that there's a trend, that's an over-statement (because) many government retirees including high-ranking officers joined Barisan Nasional (BN), just that it was not highlighted," said Professor Datuk Dr Mohammad Agus Yusoff.

According to Dr Agus, the entry of former high-ranking government officers into PAS proves that not all civil servants will vote for BN in the general elections and they are "silent voters" that are even more dangerous.

"If there are government policies and principles made that are not agreed to by civil servants, they will be the silent voters that will not vote for BN in the coming general elections.

"This group (silent voters) are more dangerous because (they) appear to support the government and formulate programmes for the government but vote against the government," said Dr Agus.

Salahuddin also disclosed that besides ex-policemen, many army leaders had also joined PAS in previous elections while a few others recently handed over their membership application forms.

"Former Land and Cooperative Development Ministry secretary-general Datuk Dr Nik Zain Nik Yusof and Datuk Ramli Buyong, the deputy vice-president of Felcra Berhad, recently joined PAS.

"Former ambassador Datuk Yeop Adlan had joined PAS long time ago," said the Kubang Kerian MP.

Former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan lauded Fauzi's move to join PAS but said he would not make a similar move.

"After this he can teach PAS about the country's laws and rules," Musa said, adding he had rejected overtures from a Pakatan Rakyat (PR) component party. Apart from PAS, the other parties there are PKR and DAP.

"It's better for people like me (former IGP) not to join politics," he said.

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