

**Bumburing to woo Kadazandusun votes for Pakatan
Malaysian Insider
August 11, 2012
By Clara Chooi**

KOTA KINABALU, Aug 11 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) has tasked its newest political ally, Datuk Seri Wilfred Mojilip Bumburing, with tackling Sabah's Kadazandusun and Murut-majority (KDM) seats, hoping the former Barisan Nasional (BN) leader's ethnicity can woo the community into its fold.

"We have this list, 24 state seats, plus nine parliamentary seats — KDM seats. If we can win these, it would be a big chunk for Pakatan," the Kadazandusun Tuaran MP told The Malaysian Insider in an interview here.

He said the pool of candidates for the KDM seats would also come from among PR leaders and those deemed popular in the respective constituencies.

The KDM are mostly Christians although a few also profess the Islamic faith, and are said to be increasingly disenchanted with the BN government over its apparent failure to resolve Sabah's longstanding problem with illegal immigrants.

Bumburing, formerly the deputy president of Sabah-based BN party United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (UPKO), had left the ruling coalition last month to support PR.

He was joined by fellow BN lawmaker Beaufort MP Datuk Seri Lajim Ukin, who was formerly a federal deputy minister and Umno supreme council member.

Both men have launched PR-friendly movements — the Angkatan Pemuda Sabah (APS) for Bumburing and Pakatan Perubahan Sabah (PPS) for Lajim — as their new political platforms for the coming polls.

Their departures have, however, been described by BN leaders as a political move fuelled not by principles but their disgruntlement at being passed over to defend their respective seats.

But Bumburing insisted that this was not the case.

He told The Malaysian Insider that he has had enough of the BN government, citing the coalition's failure to protect Sabah's sovereignty from foreign infiltration.

"What power could I gain from joining the opposition? The election can go either way. There is nothing certain in the election — you can win or you can lose... Pakatan could lose.

"But to us, this is the best alternate choice to fight for our people of Sabah," he said.

The veteran politician griped about BN's alleged failed promises, largely on resolving the state's immigrant problem as well as the disparity of development in Sabah with states in the peninsula.

"All is lost in BN. They are not looking out for our community. Even if they want development... yet they take 95 per cent of our oil revenue to Kuala Lumpur, only to give it out through mega projects to cronies.

"Look at the Petronas Twin Towers, the North-South Expressway... what do we have? We in Sabah are merely eating dust. We could no longer stay in BN," he said.

Bumburing described Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak as a "coward" living in the shadows of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, pointing to the former's initial reluctance to form the RCI.

"He is afraid of Dr Mahathir. He is a coward. Why does he come here to announce the RCI (Royal Commission of Inquiry) only after our announcements to leave, after I left? The people are with us," he said.

Dr Mahathir has long been accused of spearheading "Project IC", an initiative to award foreigners Malaysian citizenships in exchange for votes in the east Malaysian state, allegedly to help keep the ruling BN in power.

Najib is due in Sabah today for a meeting with state BN leaders and is expected to announce details of RCI into the state's illegal immigrant issue, a long drawn out problem that has plagued locals here for over four decades.

The prime minister's decision to announce the RCI details today came just days after Bumburing and Lajim's decision to quit BN, and has been described by some as a strategy to recoup losses from the duo's twin exits.

Bumburing noted that although the RCI formation has been a long sought-after demand in his political career, he would not recognise the panel.

"They are not going to be sincere. As far as we are concerned, we are dismissing whatever he announces," he said.

He extolled PR's promises for Sabah and said the only way to resolve the state's social and economic woes was to oust BN from the Putrajaya administrative capital.

He noted that Sabah's opposition front is crowded, but said it was necessary to recognise the need to negotiate a power-sharing formula that would ensure straight fights in all state seats when polls are held.

"We believe that when the election comes, the people's mind will be formed — it has to be a two-party system so you can plan your own little politics but the people will say that it is either the BN or Pakatan," he said.

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