

Pakatan wants Sin Chew to publish denial of hudud report
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By Ida Lim

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 28 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) today demanded that Sin Chew Daily publish a denial of its report that PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu had said that his party will seek to enforce the Islamic penal code if the federal opposition pact comes to power in the next general election.

“My request now is for Sin Chew to... print a denial on the issue that was brought up,” said PAS treasurer Dr Hatta Ramli at a press conference after a PR secretariat meeting.

He also said PR hopes “the denial made by Mat Sabu will get carried in the same newspaper on the front page in the next edition.”

Sin Chew Daily had splashed on its front page today a report headlined “PAS will implement hudud if it comes into power”, citing the Islamist party’s No. 2, popularly known as Mat Sabu, as saying he will seek to amend the Federal Constitution to enable the Islamic penal code to be implemented.

Mohamad told The Malaysian Insider today that when he was contacted by a reporter from Sin Chew, he never mentioned the word “hudud” in the telephone conversation.

He said he had repeatedly made clear that PAS’s wish to amend the law will be done through the parliamentary process and will not conflict with the Federal Constitution, the supreme law of the land.

“Whatever PAS wishes to do must have PR’s agreement.

“We maintain the agreement that has been agreed upon by all parties in PR,” he said, referring to the common policy framework signed by PAS and its political allies PKR and the DAP when they formed the PR opposition pact shortly after the landmark Election 2008 to counter the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition.

The three parties had grabbed 82 out of 222 parliamentary seats and 206 out of a total 576 seats in the state assemblies in the 12th general election, the biggest win for the opposition since 1969.

Hudud has long been a thorny issue for the coalition bloc, with the DAP steadfastly opposed to its enforcement in a secular government.

The previous partnership between PAS and the DAP under the Barisan Alternatif tag was broken after the 1999 general election due to disagreements over hudud.

The DAP quit the alliance after PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, who was then Terengganu menteri besar, had announced his party’s plan to set up an Islamic state and carry out hudud.

PAS’s former deputy president Nasharudin Mat Isa and DAP chairman Karpal Singh recently took their ideological quarrel over the issue public.

Mohamad's denial comes on the heels of Kedah MCA chief Datuk Chong Itt Chew who a week ago claimed that he too had been misquoted by a reporter from Malay daily Sinar Harian.

On August 21, the Malay tabloid had published a report titled "MCA Kedah sokong hudud" (Kedah MCA supports hudud) on its front page, quoting Chong as telling political foe the DAP to drop its opposition to hudud law as the Islamic penal code would not affect non-Muslims.

Chong had denied the same day Sinar's report citing him, saying he had not uttered the word "hudud" in a phone interview with the paper's reporter and accused the Malay daily of having twisted his words.

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