

Voting for PAS does not equal aye for hudud, Mustafa says
Malaysian Insider
August 28, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 28 — PAS secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali assured the Chinese community today that a vote for the Islamist party does not mean they have to support the introduction of Islamic penal law for all should the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) opposition bloc take power at the next national polls.

PAS has repeatedly been put on the defensive in recent weeks over its plans to enforce hudud, which has been passed as law in two states.

But the party has steadfastly said hudud is not part of the opposition bloc's common policy framework and cannot be carried out without the express agreement of its political partners or majority vote through the democratic process in Parliament.

"DAP is definitely against hudud and I believe that for the Chinese casting votes for PAS, it does not mean they support hudud either," Mustafa told Sin Chew Daily, the country's best-selling Chinese vernacular paper in an interview published on its web edition today.

Mustafa said that Muslims are obliged to support hudud, but stressed that the democratic process is required before any change to the Federal Constitution can be made to enable the Islamic law to be carried out nationwide.

"Parliament must pass the amendment to the Constitution... whether that happens or not is another question," he was reported saying, in a bid to calm public fears that PAS will immediately enforce the law should the party take power.

"Even if Pakatan Rakyat takes federal power we will NOT immediately try to introduce hudud because there are details to be worked out and the public's views will have to be sought," he added.

He also took pains to highlight that should hudud be introduced, it would only be enforceable on Muslims and not non-Muslims, who encompass a large number of the Chinese electorate.

In Malaysia, religion is closely tied to race with Malays automatically being classified as Muslim under the Constitution. The country's highest law, however, guarantees other races the right to practise freely their faith of choice.

"If it is introduced, it is only meant for Muslims. We cannot impose it on non-Muslims," Mustafa was quoted by Sin Chew as saying.

He told the Chinese-language newspaper that PAS had wanted to introduce hudud in Kedah, the northern state under its control, but could not do so as it did not have enough of a majority in the state assembly.

Mustafa's remarks were published after PR demanded earlier today that the paper 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," PAS treasurer Dr Hatta Ramli told reporters this afternoon after a PR secretariat meeting in Petaling Jaya.

Hatta also said PR hopes "the denial made by Mat Sabu will be carried in the same newspaper on the front page of its next edition."

Sin Chew Daily had splashed on its front page today a report headlined "PAS will implement hudud if it comes to 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 this morning 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' 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 recognised 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 enforce 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 on 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 taking his words out of context.

Hakcipta © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/voting-for-pas-does-not-equal-aye-for-hudud-mustafa-says/>