

PAS says will field non-Malays in GE13 despite difficulties
Malaysian Insider
April 8, 2013
By Syed Jaymal Zahiid

SHAH ALAM, April 8 – PAS today gave a commitment that it will field non-Muslim candidates in Election 2013 despite saying that it faced difficulties finding suitable seats for them.

Its president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said today that seat allocations talks with its allies in Pakatan Rakyat (PR) was virtually complete but most of the seats deemed suitable for the party's non-Malay candidates had been taken up by the DAP or PKR.

"There will be (non-Muslims), we are working towards it and inshallah, there will be non-Malay candidates," he told reporters after attending a dialogue on PAS' "welfare state" push here.

"The problem is a lot of the non-Muslim majority seats have been taken up by other parties but we will look for suitable seats," Hadi (picture) said.

Three days ago PAS's Hu Pang Chow had confirmed that he would likely be contesting in Ayer Hitam, a MCA stronghold in Johor, but said that he is still waiting for the Islamist party's official confirmation and announcement.

"I was told by PAS central committee, 'get ready to contest in Johor for Parliament seat'," Hu, 58, leader of the PAS Supporters Congress (PSC), told The Malaysian Insider.

"Likely in Ayer Hitam but I'm still waiting for the official letter," added the Kedah-born Chinese, who has a few decades of experience as a campaign worker under his belt, but will be contesting for the first time.

If fielded in Ayer Hitam, Hu will have to face off against MCA Youth chief Datuk Wee Ka Siong, who has proved popular in the Malay-majority seat, twice beating PAS candidates by a strong margin of 15,763 votes and 13,909 votes in the 2004 and 2008 elections respectively.

Hu also said three other PSC members will be contesting in Election 2013, with PSC women chief Kumutha Rahman going for a state seat in Johor, an Iban in a parliamentary seat in Sarawak and a PSC central committee leader in a Malacca state seat, with the latter two also first-time candidates.

PAS appears to be banking on its non-Muslim candidates to broaden its support base in Election 2013, with the party's election director saying that the move will signal to voters that the party is "open and democratic" and supported by Malaysians of different races.

Hu, and other Muslim leaders in PAS had said that they were confident of strong support from the Malays.

"There's no reason for them to give their votes to a Chinese-based party, MCA," he said, before indicating that he will be riding on Chinese voters' anger against the MCA and Barisan Nasional (BN).

"I will get at least 70 per cent of Chinese votes," he said, saying that he will explain to the

community the slogan of "PAS for all", insisting "there's no conflict between the Islamist party and Chinese voters".

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