

Local MIC leader, 103 members quit over BN's backing of Zul Noordin
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 — The MIC Shah Alam division's vice chairman and 103 other members have quit the party over Perkasa vice president Datuk Zulkifli Noordin nomination as a Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate in the constituency.

The decision to field Zulkifli has earned the ruling coalition much criticism, not just due to his reputation as an Islamist hardliner via his position in the Malay rights advocacy group Perkasa, but also the recent controversies over his insults against the Hindu community.

"Reason number one is the choice of Zul Noordin as a candidate in Shah Alam. He spoke against the Indians," C. Supayah, the division's vice-chairman told The Malaysian Insider.

Zulkifli, a syariah lawyer and incumbent Kulim-Bandar Baharu MP, is the first person to be running under the flag of "Friends of Barisan Nasional" in the May 5 general election.

Malaysian Indians have been especially angered by his candidacy due to a video in which Zulkifli refers to them as "Keling", which they consider derogatory, that went viral recently just days after another video was released in which he questioned the purity of the Ganges River, considered sacred by Hindus, and asked an Indian trader why Hindu gods did not prevent the man's shop from being flooded.

Supayah also said that another reason for his resignation was BN's failure to field a candidate against Perkasa president Datuk Ibrahim Ali, who is running independently, in the parliamentary constituency of Pasir Mas.

This has resulted in a straight fight for the constituency between Ibrahim and Nik Mohd Abduh Nik Abdul Aziz, son of the PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

"Doesn't that mean Umno supports Perkasa?" said Supayah.

Like Zulkifli, Ibrahim is also known as a hardline Islamist, especially for his controversial calls for the burning of Malay-language bibles which contain the word "Allah", which led to an uproar among the non-Muslim community.

Supayah said he also took issue with Umno Shah Alam chief Datuk Ahmad Nawawi Mohd Zin for leading the 2009 cow's head protest against the construction of a Hindu temple in the Muslim-majority area.

He said his decision to quit the party was supported by friends and several other Indian leaders, though he refused to name them.

"Since I quit, I have got tremendous calls even from people I don't know, congratulating me on my decision."

At a news conference in Shah Alam yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak told voters that Zulkifli was a champion of the Indian community.

"I've spoken to quite a number of Indians and they're supporting him," he told reporters at

the Concorde Hotel.

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