

**No quitting Pakatan, only review to strengthen ties, says Nik Aziz**  
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**BY LEE SHI-IAN**

PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat has quashed talk the party will exit Pakatan Rakyat, but gave his blessing for a review of the party's position within the alliance.

The veteran leader said any review should be focused on strengthening cooperation within Pakatan Rakyat but not to the detriment of the political alliance.

Nik Aziz, who has been a staunch backer of Pakatan Rakyat, said in a Facebook statement today that a negative review will only give the drowning Umno a lifeline.

"A review should always improve, not go backwards," Nik Aziz said in response to calls from PAS Dewan Ulama chief Datuk Harun Taib to review PAS's relationship with Pakatan Rakyat.

The party's dismal performance in the 13th general election has led to calls from members to review its position within Pakatan Rakyat, especially with PKR.

Harun blamed the party's over-tolerant stance to the demands from non-Muslims for eroding its support among Muslims.

Although he is a cleric, Nik Aziz has long had divergent views with the religious scholars' wing within PAS and is a strong advocate for cooperation with PKR and DAP.

The former Kelantan menteri besar stressed that staying in the Pakatan Rakyat alliance was the right decision.

"While it is true that we want to achieve victory in the polls, we must also remember we are an Islamic movement responsible for representing the religion in the political arena.

"The party's presence in Pakatan Rakyat has never been a mistake. It is the correct move to make in view of the current political reality."

The call for PAS to review its ties with PKR by Harun reveals how much the issue affects the Islamist party.

PKR's multiracial and secular approach to politics has always been an issue but was kept under control with support from Nik Aziz and the late PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Harun's proposal at the Ulama Multaqa SeMalaysia in Alor Star yesterday revealed that it had always been the focus of factional fighting within the party.

Former PAS deputy president Nasharudin Mat Isa, prior to being expelled from the party's Syura Council, had repeatedly urged the party to review its position within Pakatan Rakyat.

A proposal was also mooted to study the party's political consensus with its two partners, PKR and DAP, as some members were dissatisfied with the current cooperation.

Nik Aziz was also forced to deny speculation that he was pushing for an Islamic scholar to

occupy the deputy president's position, currently held by firebrand Mohamad Sabu, who is a non-ulama.

In an interview with Harakahdaily, Nik Aziz denied calling for an ulama to fill the party's deputy president post. - September 15, 2013.

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