

A unhealthy trend has made its way into PAS, laments party leader
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A PAS leader has expressed his concern at the "worst-ever" campaigning by party members ahead of its party elections in November.

"In the 35 years I have been in PAS, this is the worst campaigning I've ever seen," said PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu (pic).

He pointed out to "name-calling" and unfair "labelling" of party leaders as a phenomenon plaguing the party now.

Mohamad, or Mat Sabu as he is popularly known, is also shocked and appalled at the shifting of minds among PAS members.

He was commenting on the campaign tactics by several PAS leaders and members in preparation for its 59th party elections to be held in Shah Alam in November.

PAS members have launched all kinds of campaigns including attacking and labelling those they were not in favour of, in Facebook, through SMSes and on blogs.

"I am shocked at the change in the members' attitude towards the party elections and the leadership," Mat Sabu told The Malaysian Insider.

He pointed out that the party had its own election procedure although it was not written in the constitution.

It is a common understanding that open campaigning is not well-received and not permitted but has now become the latest trend among PAS members.

"Even I, as a PAS veteran, am sometimes bewildered looking at the latest developments in the party," Mat Sabu said.

He is hoping that the "developments" are not outside elements making their way into the party or an attempt by outsiders to take advantage of the party's openness, noting that the problem became obvious before the 13th general election.

At that time, he said, there were members who were already talking about the credibility of certain leaders. Party leaders were also labelled.

This "disease" was seen in Umno in the 1980s when several of the leaders were labelled as communists by party members, Mat Sabu observed.

"Abdullah Ahmad, Abdullah Majid dan Samad Ismail were called communists. Even Tun Dr Mahathir was almost arrested by the then Home Minister Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie," he added.

Now, Mat Sabu added, the problem has invaded PAS.

"To topple a PAS leader, many labels are given. The most popular one is 'syiah' and the

second, 'liberal'."

According to Mat Sabu, these accusations were not only discussed on websites or Facebook but also "in meetings called Liqa Fikri".

"This is an unhealthy trend and the party is monitoring the problem," he revealed.

Mat Sabu said that when he was in PAS Youth, there were differences of opinions but it was not as bad as it is now.

"I had different views from (Datuk) Abu Bakar Chik and Halim Arshat but we could sit and discuss how to face Umno together," he said.

For this PAS veteran, party elections should be used to evaluate and not to oust and label one another.

"This is the trend and I am curious as to how it came about. If not handled well, then it could see the party fade away." - September 26, 2013.

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