

**Call to review ties with Pakatan Rakyat "ridiculous", says PAS deputy president
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PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu, also known as Mat Sabu (pic), has dismissed calls for a review of ties between the Islamist party and its two partners in the Pakatan Rakyat coalition, describing such talk as "ridiculous".

"It is not a good thing to divorce ourselves from the parties in Pakatan Rakyat. We have worked hard to build our relationship and now we want to tear it down?" the fiery leader said in an interview with The Malaysian Insider.

Besides PAS, the other two parties in Pakatan Rakyat are the multi-ethnic PKR and secular Chinese-dominated DAP.

Recently, PAS Dewan Ulama chief Datuk Harun Taib called for a review of PAS's relationship with Pakatan Rakyat.

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

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

Mohamad pointed out PAS has worked hard for a long time to win the support of non-Muslims as it needs their votes to win in the general election.

In explaining the party's modus operandi pre-2008, he said the party had a headache at every election over allocation of seats.

"We rejected seats with more than 20% non-Malay voters because we knew we would not be able to win," he said.

However, in the run-up to the 2008 general election, in which the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition eventually lost its two-thirds majority, Mohamad said the mood had changed. The Chinese and Indian voters were no longer afraid to support PAS due to its collaboration with PKR and DAP.

"To me, this is a blessing. We were exhausted before this trying to get their support, and suddenly we have them," he said.

He added that despite the best efforts of MCA and Umno to get the Chinese and Indian voters to stay away from PAS, the attempts failed.

In citing an example, he said during the May national polls, MCA was campaigning on a hudud platform to spread fear that a vote for DAP is equivalent to a vote for PAS. The tactic failed and the Chinese still gave their votes to the Islamic party.

"To me, this change of mindset is priceless, it is a gift from Allah," he said.

He admitted the party's support from the Malays dropped in the 13th general election but he does not think it stemmed from the partnership with its partners in Pakatan Rakyat.

"We were trapped by the racial issues raised by BN. They were playing up on fears that if Pakatan wins, DAP will rule the country and Chinese will have control. We need to rectify this and present a true picture," he said.

As such, in the next three to four years, PAS will focus on the Malays and convince them that their rights will not be eroded but will be even better under Pakatan Rakyat.

Mohamad said even influential former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had admitted that BN was not great but it won because it succeeded in confusing the people with such fears.

As such, he said both the ulama and the non-ulama within PAS have to work hard to woo the Malay community rather than be thinking of leaving Pakatan Rakyat.

He added Pakatan Rakyat has trained its sights on Johor as the state to take over in the next general election.

"Johor has traditionally been BN's fortress. But Umno is very nervous now as the Chinese and Indians are no longer afraid of PAS. As such, they are intensifying their efforts to make the non-Muslims fear us, so why should we fall into their trap?" – September 28, 2013.

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