

Rafizi says sacking of PKNS staff wrongly timed but shows Selangor's transparency

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OLEH LOOI SUE-CHERN

PKR strategist Rafizi Ramli said the sacking of 30 PKNS Holdings Sdn Bhd contract staff last week was wrongly timed because it was done at a time when all eyes were focused on Selangor for the Kajang by-election.

He said under normal circumstances, the sacking would have been regarded as an administrative process.

"It is okay. If anything, it can be taken as an example of the Selangor government trying to be transparent.

"It came out and we have to be transparent," he told reporters after a ceramah in Bayan Lepas, last night.

The state-owned company terminated the contracts of 30 employees last week, giving them two months' severance pay.

They were asked to reapply to PKNS later and would be deployed according to needs.

Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim has defended the move as it was done according to terms of the contracts, and said it would save PKNS RM7 million annually.

The dismissals have been criticised by Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) and PKR deputy president Azmin Ali, whose own position in PKNS's board of directors is in limbo following an administrative misunderstanding.

Azmin, who has been at odds with Khalid over several issues, called the sacking illegal and inhumane, and "completely against the principles espoused by the Selangor Pakatan government", and demanded that the dismissal letters be revoked.

Rafizi said the circumstances and the background of the issue fuelled speculations on the dispute between Azmin and Khalid.

Rafizi again defended the decision to field PKR de-facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in Kajang, saying it was not about replacing Khalid as Selangor Menteri Besar.

"The question does not arise now until we win in Kajang and both Khalid and Anwar have also denied (the speculation). There is nothing on paper.

"We are keeping the option open and for it to be available, we have to go through the voters," he said, adding that Anwar needs the political legitimacy to counter Umno's attacks against PR in Selangor.

Rafizi told The Malaysian Insider recently that Anwar would provide Khalid with the political muscle to defend the state against what he called were political attacks from an increasingly extremist Umno.

"Anwar can be MB, Khalid can be adviser, Anwar can be MB, Khalid can be Exco, Khalid can be MB, Anwar can be Exco. The permutation is endless," he had said.

Meanwhile, a brief commotion took place at the ceramah last night when a group tried to intercept the Pandan MP.

The group, comprising local NGO members critical of the Penang state government, wanted to hand in a memorandum about a house on Waterfall Road that was to be torn down by local authorities.

Several men in the group were heard shouting angrily as Rafizi was ushered away towards his waiting car.

Rafizi later addressed the angry group and assured them he would study their memorandum. However, the group obstructed his car, forcing several Pakatan Rakyat supporters to clear the way for Rafizi and other speakers, including Penang Deputy Chief Minister I, Datuk Mohd Rashid Hasnon. – February 9, 2014.

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