

## **A Woman Menteri Besar In Malaysia?**

**Bernamea**

**July 9, 2014**

**By**

**Mohd**

**Hisham**

**Abdul**

**Rafar**

KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama) -- With calls for Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim to quit echoing louder by the day, political observers and party leaders are already pondering on the possible candidates to replace the embattled Selangor Menteri Besar.

The heat is on Abdul Khalid especially after he lost the bid for the Kuala Selangor Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) division head's post with the state Pakatan Rakyat members PAS and DAP also joining the tirade against the Menteri Besar.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) Youth Chief and Bukit Katil Parliament member Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin is reported to have said that Abdul Khalid's loss in Kuala Selangor is a testimony that the grassroots have indicated that its time for him to go.

His party compatriot, the Kuala Langat Parliament Member Abdullah Sani Abdul Hamid had requested the Menteri Besar to heed to the voice of the grassroots for the sake of the party.

And on Sunday night, rumours went viral through numerous mediums that Abdul Khalid would meet Selangor's Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah at the palace on Monday morning to hand over his resignation letter.

### **WHO THEN CAN LEAD SELANGOR?**

Now the question is, who could replace Abdul Khalid as the Menteri Besar?

Among the names that political observers do not rule out are PKR President Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who is also the Kajang state assemblywoman, and PKR's Deputy President Mohamed Azmin Ali who is the state assemblyman for Bukit Antarabangsa?

Political observers see that in the event Abdul Khalid falls out of favour and Mohamed Azmin fails to muster strong support within Pakatan Rakyat, then Dr Wan Azizah is set to become the new Menteri Besar.

However, Malaysia has yet to see a state headed by a woman and therefore is there really a chance for Dr Wan Azizah to become the Menteri Besar?

Commenting on this, the head of the Politics, Security and International Relations Cluster of the National Professor Council (MPN) Prof Datuk Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak said there is nothing to stop a woman from being appointed as the Menteri Besar.

"The laws of setting up the Selangor state government does not mention in detail on the gender of the person appointed as the Menteri Besar, except that the person has to be a Malay and a Muslim.

"The Menteri Besar has to be someone of integrity, has the command of the majority in the state assembly and the appointment consented by the Sultan," he said.

#### GOING AGAINST THE NORM

A law lecturer with Universiti Islam Antarabangsa (UIA) Associate Professor Dr Shamrahayu Abdul Aziz, who concurred with Mohamed Mustafa, said though gender is not a criteria in selecting a Menteri Besar, the post has traditionally been held by men.

"There is nothing wrong from the legal viewpoint, but it breaks the tradition of men holding the Menteri Besar's post. And there is nothing wrong for a woman to take up the post of Menteri Besar, all that matters is their merit and ability to administer the state.

"Though there is no legal restrictions, when things become difficult and complicated, that is when it is important to have a man to lead a state," she said.

#### LIMITATIONS

And in the event a woman is chosen as the Menteri Besar, will there be any restrictions in her role especially in advising the Sultan and in officiating religious events?

Mohamed Mustafa explained that there has yet to be any precedence on the matter and it was difficult to see of the problems ahead when a woman takes

over the post of Menteri Besar.

"A woman Menteri Besar will have to sit away from the Sultan, and during religious events including the launching of mosques and religious function the woman Menteri Besar may have to delegate a male Exco member.

"This are among the complications that a women MB is set to face but in advising the Sultan, I believe it should not be a problem," he said.

Dr Shamrahayu said her personal views were that this is not something that suits the Muslim norm where leadership positions were the men's domain.

"It is undeniable that a woman can take on the role of a Menteri Besar, only that it is not a norm for a woman to be in that position and there can be some limitations on the nature of work she can undertake," she said.

In the 13th General Election in May 2013, the Pakatan Rakyat won 44 of the 56 Selangor state assembly seats compared with 36 in 2008 with PKR winning 14 seats, while PAS and DAP 15 seats each. BN won the remaining 12 seats.

Meanwhile, a Social Science lecturer with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Prof Dr Ahmad Atory Hussain noted that whether it is Dr Wan Azizah or Mohamed Azmin, it all depends on the Sultan of Selangor.

Also the Sultan may want Abdul Khalid to continue.

"If the Sultan wants Abdul Khalid to continue, he will only hold the Menteri Besar's post for a while and the Sultan will see if he could command support in the state assembly. If Abdul Khalid loses support, it will lead to a crisis and his highness will intervene," he said to Bernama.

Ahmad Atory said however, the Sultan's consent is not an absolute guarantee for any leader to hold on to their position as what is more pertinent is the support of the people that would decide the leader's fate.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1052383>