

PAS will not support a woman MB as yet, says state rep
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PAS will not support a woman as menteri besar just yet as its current consensus is just to allow them to contest general elections, said a Selangor exco member from PAS, pouring cold water over any attempt to put PKR president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as Selangor menteri besar.

The Islamist party is part of Pakatan Rakyat (PR), which said it might decide as early as this month on Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim's job as Selangor Menteri Besar.

Dr Wan Azizah is a contender for the post but an Umno lawyer has said women cannot take the job due to their menstruation affecting their presence in some religious ceremonies.

PAS's executive councillor in charge of Youth, Sports, Infrastructure and Public Facilities, Dr Yunus Khairi, said using a woman's menses was not an excuse to preclude her appointment to leadership roles in the state.

"At this point, PAS has not reached a stage where it wants a woman to lead the state. But as assembly representatives, we have a consensus to allow women to contest and represent the party," he said after attending a Ramadan event with the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, in Sepang, Selangor last night.

Yunus (pic, left) also said appointing Dr Wan Azizah as menteri besar to replace Khalid would need the consensus of everyone in PR. The other parties in PR are PKR and DAP.

Both PAS and DAP hold 15 seats each in the 56-seat state assembly while PKR holds 14 seats. Umno has the other 12 seats.

"Whether she (Dr Wan Azizah) qualified or not is another matter.

"But using menses is not an excuse to exclude any woman from the leadership," Yunus said.

Umno lawyer Datuk Hafarizam Harun stirred up a hornets' nest yesterday when the New Straits Times reported him as saying that it was not practical for a woman to be the menteri besar as she would have to perform official Islamic religious obligations with or on behalf of the Malay rulers, which can only be done by a Muslim man.

Hafarizam said this aspect of the job was the reason why no state government before and after Merdeka had appointed a chief executive from the fairer sex.

"A woman MB has to perform Islamic religious obligations with, or on behalf of, the Malay ruler and this will be an obstacle when she is having her period," he told The Malaysian Insider in response to the New Straits Times report which brought him ridicule.

Hafarizam had said that despite no specific clause excusing a woman from the menteri besar post, a menstruating woman would face obstacles in her official duties, adding that this was the reason there has never been a female menteri besar.

"This is because should a woman menteri besar suffer from 'uzur sharie' (period), there will be many obstacles for her to accompany the sultan at religious functions.

"Hence, though the article under the Selangor constitution may not hinder a woman from becoming a menteri besar, but by convention, there could be problems because of the said circumstances," he added.

Hafarizam's view was also supported by International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) lecturer Dr Shamrahayu Abdul Aziz who said it was not practical to have a woman MB.

But Hafarizam made it clear that he did not single out Dr Wan Azizah, 61, as being not qualified to the post because of menses, saying he was speaking in general terms in the New Straits Times report.

Dr Wan Azizah, a grandmother of four, was elected Kajang assemblyman in a by-election in March, which the PKR had triggered with the view of installing its de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as the Selangor menteri besar.

However, Anwar's conviction for sodomy effectively ruled him out from contesting and paved the way for his wife, Dr Wan Azizah, to run in

Kajang.

She defeated Barisan Nasional's Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun with a 5,379-vote majority and is the frontrunner to replace Khalid, who is facing calls from fellow party members to quit.

Others said to be in the running for the post are Bukit Antarabangsa lawmaker Azmin Ali and state executive councillor Iskandar Abdul Samad.

Article 51(2) of the Selangor State Constitution only stipulates the criteria that no person should be appointed as menteri besar "unless he is of the Malay race and professes the Muslim religion", prompting PR to consider Dr Wan Azizah for the job. - July 16, 2014.

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