

We are prepared to lose Selangor in snap polls, says PKR's Rafizi
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PKR is willing to lose the Selangor state government in a snap election, if that is what it takes to remove Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim as the menteri besar, said the party's strategy director Rafizi Ramli.

"If we have to do snap polls to resolve (the Selangor menteri besar tussle) and we lose a state, so be it. I'm prepared, we are prepared, PKR is prepared. I'm sure DAP is being prepared, while PAS has to decide," the Pandan MP told reporters last night.

"I think defending a principle is worth losing a government over... People come and go, we come and go. But the trust the rakyat have towards Pakatan Rakyat, we can't break that."

Rafizi, the architect of the "Kajang Move" which had sought to replace Khalid with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said it was a matter of integrity to remove Khalid given his out-of-court settlement with Bank Islam over a RM70 million debt.

A snap election is possible in Selangor if Khalid loses a no-confidence vote in the state legislative assembly.

Rafizi admitted that snap polls would put Pakatan Rakyat in a difficult position and there was a huge risk of losing the state government.

Saying governments were temporary, Rafizi said what mattered most was that they did not betray the trust of the people who voted them in 2008 and 2013.

"If you break that, it will take generations to convince them they can trust us. And that's why the moment there is, in our opinion, enough evidence that his (Khalid's) integrity is suspect, we have no choice (but to remove him)."

Rafizi was speaking to reporters after participating in a forum on the Selangor crisis at the Kuala Lumpur Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall last night.

Rafizi (pic, left) explained to the crowd that PKR began to suspect that Khalid's integrity was compromised after they got wind in January that he was negotiating with "third parties" on settling his RM70 million debt with Bank Islam.

The party, he said, suspected the third party was Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Abdul Manaf, a lawyer with links to Umno, although they had no concrete proof of this at that time.

"By the time we went into the Kajang Move, it was a political decision based on a hunch we couldn't take the risk of having Khalid remain as menteri besar. We felt the state government couldn't be held ransom," Rafizi told the packed hall.

He said PKR had been willing to work with Khalid's managerial style, which included making decisions unilaterally and not allowing parties to interfere in government administration.

But he said the party had to draw the line when suspicions were cast on the MB's integrity.

He said their suspicions were confirmed two weeks after the Kajang Move was announced, with the Federal Court announcing that both Khalid and Bank Islam had agreed to settle the debt out of court.

Rafizi said this was immediately followed by a "lopsided deal" signed between the state government and Putrajaya on the water restructuring deal, as well as hundreds of acres of land sold to Rashid's firm, Ecoworld.

"On March 25 2014, Khalid signed a memorandum with Ecoworld and it was announced that the project to build 2400 affordable flats, a project worth RM591 million, was also awarded to Ecoworld.

"On March 31 2014, Bank Islam and Khalid announced officially that the two parties had agreed to not continue legal action because of the out-of-court settlement," said Rafizi.

"If you are in our position, what would you have done? It was very clear that this was a serious case of integrity and transparency."

He said Khalid's explanations to Pakatan leaders over the settlement had left them unsatisfied, and they believed he had been negotiating the deal for months.

On why PKR did not reveal all this when they announced the "Kajang Move", Rafizi said it was unfair for Khalid as they had no documented proof of the deal until now.

But what they heard was enough for them to initiate the Kajang Move, which was aimed at allowing them the option of replacing Khalid with Anwar if necessary, said Rafizi.

The "Kajang Move" was scuppered after Anwar's sodomy trial was "speeded up" and the Court of Appeal found him guilty of the sodomy charge involving his aide, Mohd Saiful Bukhari Azlan.

PKR and DAP now want Khalid to be replaced by PKR president Datuk Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, but PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang has thrown his support behind the embattled MB, causing a rift within Pakatan.

PAS's central committee will meet this weekend to decide whether to allow PKR to hold the Selangor MB post, or to support Hadi's stance.

Yesterday, Anwar said the MB crisis could be resolved through a smooth transition, a vote of no-confidence, or a snap election.

However, Khalid has maintained that he will not resign, prompting PKR to send him a show cause letter. – August 6, 2014.

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