

PAS clerics insist Khalid stays as Selangor MB
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The PAS Shura Council want Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim to remain as the Selangor Menteri Besar, sharpening the divide with their Pakatan Rakyat (PR) ally PKR who want him replaced.

But the top council of clerics said today they are willing to re-assess their stand on the issue if Khalid is prosecuted by the authorities such as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) or the courts.

The clerics, led by PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and his deputy Datuk Dr Haron Din, met yesterday.

The PR leadership council will meet this Sunday afternoon to decide on Khalid's fate. Both PAS and DAP, the other member in the coalition, will have leadership meetings on Sunday morning to consider PKR's proposal to put its president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as the new Selangor MB.

"The position of Selangor menteri besar is a joint right agreed by all three component parties that Khalid stays on as the Selangor menteri besar for a second term after the 13th general election," spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and his deputy Daruk Dr Haron Din said in a joint statement today.

"As long as the menteri besar has not been charged for violating his trust, the PAS Shura Council has decided Khalid should stay on as menteri besar.

"But if the authorities such as the MACC or courts find him guilty, then the Shura Council is willing to re-assess his position."

The decision of the council, which is a higher body than the party's central executive committee (CEC), could influence the outcome of its crucial meeting on August 10.

A PAS source told The Malaysian Insider yesterday that normally the CEC, which is made up of officers elected at the PAS muktamar (general assembly), would meet first. The Shura Council would only then give their decision after hearing the CEC's views.

"It's as if someone wants to get the Shura Council's support before the CEC meeting on August 10," said a CEC member who requested anonymity.

The Shura Council is the highest decision-making body after the PAS muktamar, and is chaired by Nik Aziz with Haron as his deputy and Datuk Nik Zawawi Salleh as secretary.

Other members of the council include party president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, vice-president Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, Datuk Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman, Datuk Ahmad Yakub, Datuk Dr Mahfodz Mohamed, Datuk Muhammed Daud, Nasrudin Hassan, Zaharudin Muhammad, Wardah Tahir, Nadzirah Mohamad dan Hashim Jasin.

Yesterday, Khalid's principal private secretary lodged a report with the MACC against the menteri besar to allow the authorities to initiate investigations against him.

Mohamad Yasid Bidin arrived at the MACC Shah Alam office at 3pm yesterday with documents given to him by PKR secretary-general Datuk Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

Also present were his two political secretaries Mustapha Mohd Talib, Azman Abidin, and several other staff and PKR members.

"As a staff of the menteri besar's office, it is my responsibility to submit this to the MACC to allow it to investigate the case," Yasib said.

He said Khalid was convinced he had committed no wrongdoing, despite the allegations made by Saifuddin in the PKR report.

Saifuddin had reportedly said that he would expose the reasons why PKR wanted Khalid removed as MB to be replaced by its president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail.

He had said among the issues involved were Khalid's RM66.67 million debt settlement with Bank Islam, which was settled out of court, as well as the sale of land to developer Eco World at below-market rate.

Khalid has denied allegations that he was involved in any wrongdoing and challenged PKR to report the matter to MACC.

At the last Pakatan Rakyat presidential council meeting, PKR had announced that it was replacing Khalid with Dr Wan Azizah.

Its partners PAS and DAP agreed to take the proposal back to be discussed within their respective parties.

But even before the PAS meeting on August 10, Hadi announced that he wanted Khalid to remain as MB, a decision backed by Nik Aziz.

His statement caused a split in the Islamist party, as some felt the president should have waited until after the August 10 meeting.

The decision was also criticised by PKR, who claimed that the choice of the MB was up to them.

PKR, meanwhile, issued a show cause letter to Khalid on Tuesday, demanding that he explain his refusal to abide by the party's directive that he step down to make way for Dr Wan Azizah.

But Khalid responded yesterday that the letter was "defective" as it lacked specifics for him to reply.

He said he would announce his stance after the PR leadership meeting this Sunday.
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