

PAS 100% behind PKR in Permatang Pauh, says top official

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The PAS central leadership will fully back Pakatan Rakyat in defending the Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat, said its central committee member Datuk Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa.

He said the party had already declared its support unconditionally, countering talks of a PAS boycott that was now fuelled by reports that its Permatang Pauh division was demanding an open apology and a retraction from PKR over the statements it had made on hudud.

Mujahid, who is also the Parit Buntar MP said, he was at the central committee meeting when the party decided unanimously to back PKR's candidate, whoever the person might be.

"As far as the PAS central leadership is concerned, it has been affirmed that the party will participate in the campaign and help the PKR candidate.

"There were no discussions that support would only be given if certain conditions were met.

"That decision was also been accepted by Penang PAS. The decision made at the federal level is more superior and we are executing that decision."

Mujahid was commenting on reports that the Permatang Pauh PAS division issued an ultimatum to PKR after its meeting yesterday, threatening to boycott the by-election if PKR did not fulfil two conditions.

Division chairman Omar Hassan said the two conditions were PKR making a public apology and retracting its statement over the PAS-led Kelantan government's hudud bill last month.

The two conditions are to be met by Saturday, which is nomination day for the Permatang Pauh by-election.

"This is the stand we have decided at the meeting. We will give our commitment to support PKR in the campaign if the party agrees to the two conditions," he said.

At the meeting, Omar also reportedly said Permatang Pauh PAS would present a "surprise" in the by-election if PKR and DAP continued to oppose PAS's hudud agenda.

Mujahid told The Malaysian Insider that the divisions have no standing to refuse to work with PR because that would mean disrespecting the decision by the party's central leadership and the state party.

"Who are you to dictate conditions? Are you telling the PAS central committee what to do? Are you implying that we were stupid to make that decision?"

The Penang PAS deputy commissioner said he considered the Permatang Pauh division's motion null and void.

He said no one could stop divisions from making motions or decisions at their meetings but that did not mean they could have whatever they wanted.

"They can say what they want but they do not represent PAS's stand. PAS is still committed to the PR cause."

Mujahid said Omar had also contradicted himself by making the demands to PKR because he himself was present at the launch of PKR's Permatang Pauh by-election machinery last Tuesday and declared his support.

He said as division chief, Omar should not have accepted a motion that went against a decision made by the party's central committee.

"I advise them to retract the motion. I am trying to understand why they are echoing Umno.

"Hudud is an Umno issue. Why is Permatang Pauh PAS saying what Umno wants us to say? Are they with PAS or Umno?"

Mujahid, who is directing the PAS election machinery in the by-election, admitted if the division went ahead with the boycott, it could jeopardise the campaign.

He said PAS's main focus in the campaign was Permatang Pasir, a state seat in Permatang Pauh held by the Islamist party.

In the 2013 general election, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim secured Permatang Pauh by winning 37,090 or 58.56% of the 63,332 votes cast, with a 11,721 majority.

Based on the result analysis, Anwar received 40% Malay votes, 88% Chinese votes and 60% Indian votes to win the seat.

His biggest win was in the PAS stronghold – the Permatang Pasir state seat – where he won 13,266 (66%) of the 19,965 votes cast in the 2013 polls, with a 6,632-vote majority.

Mujahid said they would be coordinating their activities with the main PKR election machinery, such as programmes involving top PAS leaders.

"Our top leaders should be coming to take part in campaign but with the Rompin by-election, which PAS is contesting, held at the same time, they will not be able to be here all the time."

The Permatang Pauh by-election was called after Anwar's application for a royal pardon over his sodomy conviction was rejected. Polling day is on May 7.

The Rompin by-election, which follows the death of Tan Sri Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis in a helicopter crash, begins on Wednesday with polling on May 5. – April 20, 2015.

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