

BN will still fall even if PAS leaves Pakatan, says Mat Sabu
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By Kc Nazari

Barisan Nasional will lose Putrajaya at the next general election, with or without the Islamist party in the Pakatan Rakyat coalition, says a top PAS leader. PAS enjoys strong support among rural Malay Muslim voters.

In a warning to his party colleagues not to feel that they were indispensable to PR, PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu said the public was committed to changing the government.

"The people are committed (changing the government), regardless of PAS. So we in PAS should not be arrogant.

"Without PAS, the people will still change the government," said Mohamad, better known as Mat Sabu, in a speech at Universiti Malaya in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Mat Sabu's statement comes in the back of infighting between PAS and its PR partners – DAP and PKR – over the former's insistence on enforcing the Shariah Criminal Code II in Kelantan.

Senior PR leaders have even predicted that the coalition would break up after PAS's elections next month in which a pro-Umno faction is expected to take over the party's leadership.

Mat Sabu based his assessment on how PKR managed to increase its support in the Permatang Pauh by-election early this month and the turnout at the #KitaLawan rallies in Kuala Lumpur.

The PKR candidate for Permatang Pauh, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, managed to maintain her support level in the Malay-majority parliamentary constituency.

Mat Sabu said Wan Azizah achieved this despite an aggressive campaign by BN and a boycott call from PAS members in Penang.

It was reported that Dr Wan Azizah also claimed that Malay votes for her went up by 4% to 5%, mostly among young voters.

The KitaLawan rallies, meanwhile, managed to get good turnouts even though there was no official support from PAS's massive voluntary corps, Unit Amal, said Mat Sabu.

He said street protests were now being driven by a third force of civil society leaders, such as Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah and student activist Adam Adli Abdul Halim.

"This group is getting larger and they are (politically) independent," he said at a presentation of a master's thesis titled "Mohamad Sabu's struggles in PAS 1978 to 2013" by Mohd Ikhwanata Taib at UM's Arts and Social Sciences Faculty.

Mat Sabu said he was disappointed with how certain individuals in PAS were aiding political rival Umno to stay in power when results from the Permatang Pauh and Rompin by-elections showed that the latter was losing support.

This made the current political atmosphere the best opportunity to work towards changing the government, he added.

"That's why we are seeing Muhyiddin getting worried (Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin) and the ruling party getting worried.

"But at a time where they teetering, someone goes and helps props them up. This is baffling.

"Someone goes and says we are in politics not to take over the government but to carry out reforms.

"(They say) that if Najib (Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak) is willing to reform, then there is no need to change the government. But for us, there can be no reform without changing the government."

Although Mat Sabu did not name him, it is learnt that he was referring to Kelantan Deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Mohd Amar Abdullah.

Amar had been reported as saying that PAS was willing to forgo taking over Putrajaya if it achieved its goal of enforcing the Shariah Criminal Code II in Kelantan.

PAS has been trying to garner support from Muslim MPs to amend certain federal laws to allow it to enforce the code or hudud. – May 26, 2015.

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