

Ousted PAS leaders say defeat a blessing in disguise

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By Zulkifli Sulong

PAS progressive leaders who were shown the door in the recently concluded party polls have described their en-bloc defeat as a blessing in disguise, saying that it has opened a window of opportunity to build "something better for Malaysia".

Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, the secretary of the acting committee that calls itself G18 (a reference to the 18 ousted PAS leaders) said their exit from the top party posts gave rise to the idea of forming a more inclusive movement for Malaysians.

"Over the years, we have been effected reforms and changes in PAS. Very recently all these seemed to be in danger of being rolled back. Now, we are free to embark on a new endeavour that is more inclusive or all-encompassing," he told The Malaysian Insider.

He said the G18's first meeting in Muar, Johor on June 16 was fruitful and had lead to the formation of an action committee for the purpose.

He said that Mohamad Sabu, who failed to defend the deputy president post, had been elected as chairman of the group, former vice-president Salahuddin Ayub as his deputy and former Youth leader Suhaizan Kaiat as assistant secretary.

The rest of the G18 were appointed as committee members for the movement.

Dzulkefly said the movement aimed to bring together all like-minded civil society movements and their leaders, particularly Islamist NGOs, to develop a new platform based on political Islam that was truly inclusive, engaging and better able to contextualise the plural demography and the many mutually exclusive demands and constraints.

"We believe this platform will be better accepted by the people because it is the friendly face of Islam, inclusive and adept to a multi-religious and multi-ethnic nation," he said.

Besides cooperating with Pakatan Rakyat's PKR and DAP, the new movement will also embrace those who had similar ambitions and vision.

However, Dzulkefly insisted that the G18 would not be confrontational in its approach or turn PAS into an enemy.

"We will look towards the future instead and try to forget our differences. We will bring fresh ideas for the future and embark on the bigger agenda of striving for 'A Better Malaysia for All'," he said.

Dzulkefly said during Ramadan, the group would be busy meeting with both Muslim

and non-Muslim bodies and community leaders in the country to explain what the movement was about.

He said further announcements would only be made after the Aidilfitri celebrations and after getting feedback from the grassroots and relevant bodies.

The group is reportedly planning a nationwide roadshow and will be seriously advocating their campaign for a politics of "Harapan Baru" or "The New Hope and Dream" after the Hari Raya celebration. – June 22, 2015.

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