

PAS begins to feel the chill of isolation
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By Zulkifli Sulong

PAS now appears to be out in the cold of various programmes being organised by civil society and other opposition parties following the break up of Pakatan Rakyat triggered by its decision to end ties with DAP.

The Islamist party has decided to organise its own version of a Bersih 4 rally after not being invited to be part of plans for the mega rally on August 29.

PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said that the party would only be sending three representatives to Bersih 4 as it was not being spearheaded by them.

"We decided to participate in Bersih but this Bersih 4 is not headed by us. The agenda is not by us, it's by others.

"So we are only sending three from our side to the rally, we are not asking our members to join.

"We will have another gathering headed by PAS and we will invite others," Hadi said during a speech in Ipoh on Sunday night.

Besides Bersih 4, the Islamist party has been cast aside from two other events, which were a meeting of opposition parties on July 29 and the handing over of a memorandum in support of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) on August 6.

On July 29, opposition leader Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail called for a meeting among the opposition parties but it was cancelled at the last minute as DAP said it did not want to attend the meeting if PAS was involved.

PAS had decided to send three representatives to the meeting – deputy president Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, secretary-general Datuk Takiyudin Hassan and elections director Datuk Mustafa Ali.

The PAS leaders arrived at the PKR office in Petaling Jaya for the meeting but found that it had been canceled. Dr Wan Azizah held a meeting with non-governmental organisation (NGO) heads instead.

On August 6, all opposition leaders except PAS met at the MACC office to show moral support for the anti-graft agency which was the target of police investigations in relation to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) at the time.

The Malaysian Insider understands that PAS leaders were not informed nor invited to be part of the visit.

This led to the Selangor PAS Youth wing going it alone by sending its own memorandum of support to MACC the next day.

Now, PAS has found itself being shunned from plans for Bersih 4.

While all opposition parties, including PAS splinter group Gerakan Harapan Baru (GHB) were invited to plan the rally, PAS was left out of it completely.

This has raised questions if PAS would participate in the rally, given that its supporters have traditionally beefed up numbers in previous Bersih rallies.

PAS, as a highly-disciplined and organised party at the grassroots level, has also traditionally provided support with its Volunteer Corp (Unit Amal) which has helped to keep order and security in past rallies.

PAS leaders have been debating whether the party should officially endorse and lend support to Bersih 4 after being shunned.

The only PAS leader formally invited by Bersih 4 to the rally is deputy president Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man.

Tuan Ibrahim announced at a PAS committee meeting last Saturday that the party would attend Bersih 4 and will send two representatives to meetings – vice-president Idris Ahmad and the party president's press officer Kamaruzaman Mohamad.

But Hadi appeared to override this, with a subsequent statement to clarify that PAS did not intend to mobilise its members for the rally, and would only send representatives instead. – August 11, 2015.

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