

Amid PAS's overtures to Umno, one leader supports no-confidence vote against Najib
The Malaysian Insider
August 19, 2015
By Zulkifli Sulong

PAS elections director Datuk Mustafa Ali agrees that the Islamist party's lawmakers should take part in a no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in the Dewan Rakyat, although the party has yet to discuss such a move.

The former party secretary-general's stance appears to contradict that of other PAS leaders who have issued supportive statements of Najib as of late.

"Personally, I agree with such a proposal, even though PAS has not discussed it yet," Mustafa told The Malaysian Insider, amid talk of a move to persuade Barisan Nasional (BN) and opposition lawmakers to support a no-confidence motion against Najib.

One blog has named 20 BN lawmakers as being part of such a plan. Several of them have already denied the allegations, and police reports have been lodged against it.

Yesterday Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi also cleared them of any wrong doing.

"I have heard of such efforts but PAS is yet to be a part of it. It is not against the rules, laws or democracy of Malaysia," said Mustafa.

He believed that the no-confidence motion could succeed, but only if BN lawmakers took part in it as well.

"I heard that many BN MPs are also unhappy with the current prime minister. So it may happen," he said.

Zahid had also spoken of a plan to topple the government through unconstitutional means, saying on Sunday that it was led by an elderly BN leader.

But Mustafa said Zahid was wrong to say that the move was unconstitutional.

"This is not toppling the government. There is a difference between changing the government through democratic means and toppling it through a coup d'etat," said Mustafa.

He added that there were four ways a government could be removed democratically.

They are: general elections; a vote of no-confidence in the house of representatives (Dewan Rakyat) or state legislature (Dewan Negeri); a statutory declaration (SD) that is accepted by the Sultan at the state level and by the King at the federal level; and a rejection of the annual federal budget.

"If the budget tabled by the government is rejected by a majority of the lawmakers, the prime minister must resign.

"This is all part of a democracy and cannot be considered as going against democratic practices. It has happened in this country and in other countries that practice democratic systems."

Mustafa also urged Zahid and the government not to clamp down or threaten those who wished to change the government through democratic means, adding that he believed political parties in Malaysia would not resort to violence.

"There has been no case of this before, and Malaysians would not do it. All political parties would oppose efforts to change the government through violence."

Last Sunday, Zahid said any attempts to topple the government through the back door would have to be done "over the dead bodies of Umno members".

Talk of moves against the current administration headed by Datuk Seri Najib Razak comes as the prime minister is pressured to account for RM2.6 billion deposited in his personal accounts, a large sum of which was transferred to him ahead of the general elections in 2013.

He is also implicated in alleged financial wrongdoing of his brainchild, state investment firm 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), which has amassed debts of RM42 billion, and which critics are accusing him of trying to cover up through a series of actions against law enforcement agencies which had been investigating the firm and him as well.

His own party, Umno, is also in turmoil especially after he dropped party deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and vice president Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal from his Cabinet. – August 19, 2015.

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