

No confidence vote against Najib as early as first week of Parliament

The Malaysian Insider

Oct 6, 2015

By Eileen Ng

PKR will press ahead with a no-confidence vote against embattled Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak despite not having obtained the agreement of its partners in Pakatan Harapan, with a motion to be filed as early as within the first week of the next Parliament sitting.

This was discussed at PKR's political bureau meeting recently, although the matter has yet to be brought up for further discussion with its Pakatan Harapan allies DAP and Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah).

With less than two weeks before Parliament reconvenes on October 19, PKR is mulling a few options on how to push through a no-confidence motion.

PKR secretary-general Rafizi Ramli (pic, left) said it could be in the form of an emergency motion, which can be filed by any federal lawmaker within 24 hours.

"The Speaker will most likely rule it out and not allow it to be debated but we can try to persuade the Speaker to at least allow whoever tables it to read the contents of the motion so that it is in Parliament's records," the Pandan MP told The Malaysian Insider.

Another option is to ensure that the 2016 Budget, which Najib is scheduled to table on October 23, is defeated when it is put to a vote.

Though symbolic, Rafizi said such actions would be akin to a vote of no-confidence against the prime minister, who is also the finance minister.

Numbers game

Opposition parties, however, lack the numbers for the two-thirds majority needed to push a no-confidence motion through, with 88 members in the 222-seat of the Dewan Rakyat.

The newly-formed Pakatan Harapan opposition pact only has 72 MPs. PAS is not part of the pact following a fallout with DAP that led to the collapse of the earlier alliance, Pakatan Rakyat. The Islamist party has also vowed not to work with Amanah, branding its leaders "traitors" as they were once from PAS.

Moreover, it is not known if former ally PAS will support such a move, after president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang in July warned his MPs not to support any motion of no confidence against the prime minister if it is tabled to force his resignation, arguing that the Islamist party would only make changes through "healthy" ways.

PKR's allies DAP and Amanah, too, are pessimistic over the success of a no-confidence

vote against Najib, citing their lack of numbers.

"The question of when (it is tabled) is secondary, the question is whether you have the numbers. Even with PAS, it is not enough.

"It is a question if the BN members can be persuaded to throw their support behind the motion," said DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang. PAS now has 16 MPs, after four left for Amanah while one joined PKR.

Shah Alam federal lawmaker Khalid Samad (pic, right), who is also Amanah's parliament whip, said the BN backbenchers should be the ones raising such a motion.

"There is no point for us to bring the motion because we do not have the numbers. I am of the opinion that we should let the BN backbenchers do it, and we will support such a motion," he said.

Symbolic but necessary gesture

But PKR's Rafizi remained adamant that regardless of the outcome, the tabling of a no-confidence vote was what the public wanted.

"Our argument is that we can still do it because the public expects it. Any amount of pressure on the PM is good and that is what the opposition should do.

"The public is aware of the reality that we do not have the numbers," he said.

Rafizi said several attempts can be made by different lawmakers to push through the no-confidence motion, irrespective of the outcome.

"Imagine a PM going through four to five successive attempts of no-confidence within the space of a month. This will further erode his credibility," he added.

However, he acknowledged the concerns of partners DAP and Amanah and said a collective decision on the matter would be made at the Pakatan Harapan level soon.

Najib's critics had called for a no-confidence motion to be tabled against him, following allegations of financial scandal surrounding his brainchild, state investment vehicle 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) as well as the RM2.6 billion "donation" from an unknown Middle Eastern benefactor into his personal accounts ahead of the 2013 general election.

PKR had previously said the opposition only needed 25 BN parliamentarians to support the no-confident motion to force Najib to step down.

Najib's supporter-turned-staunch critic, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had also urged BN federal lawmakers to throw their support behind a no-confidence motion. – October 6, 2015.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/no-confidence-vote-against-najib-as-early-as-first-week-of-parliament/malaysia/article/no-confidence-vote-against-najib-as-early-as-first-week-of-parliament>