

Pakatan Rakyat long buried, PKR tells PAS
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By Zulkifli Sulong

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) has long been buried, a PKR leader told PAS today after the Islamist party's deputy president insisted that the old opposition pact was still alive with just the two parties.

PKR elections director Datuk Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said PR, which had comprised PKR, DAP and PAS, no longer had a common policy framework, nor a presidential council that made joint decisions, nor a secretariat that coordinated events and activities for the pact.

All these had existed after PR was formed on April 1, 2008 following the general election that year, with the common policy framework drawn up on December 19, 2009. PR was declared dead in June after PAS cut ties with DAP.

"Today, all of that no longer exists. That means PR no longer functions," Saifuddin, the former PKR secretary-general said in response by PAS deputy president Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man's statement.

Tuan Ibrahim had said that PR was still alive with PAS and PKR, as proven through support and political collaboration it had in Selangor and Kelantan.

"PR without DAP is a political platform, it is still strong and remains until now," Tuan Ibrahim had said.

The PAS deputy president had also said that the party just met with PKR last week where they agreed to strengthen their cooperation.

But Saifuddin today said Tuan Ibrahim might have understood the meeting differently.

The PKR leader said there had been four meetings with PAS so far, and all were headed by PKR president Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

None of these meetings, however, had been attended by the Islamist party's president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

No political decisions were made in those meetings, which only saw the two parties exchange views on current issues, Saifuddin said, adding that it was PKR's policy to maintain an open and inclusive approach.

"In one of the meetings, which I attended, PKR suggested that PAS agreed to a 'one-against-one' formula and the PAS representatives asked for time to bring up the matter with the PAS leadership.

"The idea, if PAS agrees, can be implemented via an electoral pact, and not through Pakatan Rakyat, as Tuan Ibrahim might have understood," Saifuddin said.

Saifuddin added that Pakatan Harapan was then formed as a new coalition between PKR, DAP and Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah), a splinter party helmed by progressive PAS leaders who were ousted in party elections earlier this year.

"The rationale of setting up Pakatan Harapan is to fill the void immediately to give the people an alternative. PAS was invited to join the new coalition but it is not ready to come onboard," Saifuddin said.

PAS has refused to join the new pact, saying it can no longer work with DAP after cutting ties with its former ally, and because Amanah leaders were "traitors" for abandoning PAS.

But forming Pakatan Harapan was a priority, he added, and PKR's goal was to strengthen the new pact to face Umno and Barisan Nasional in the next general election.

The new pact had also proceeded with its plans as a coalition, Saifuddin said.

The first presidential council meeting under Pakatan Harapan was held on October 19, after which the coalition's alternative budget was revealed by opposition leader Dr Wan Azizah on October 21.

Joint statements by the Pakatan Harapan leadership have also been made on various current issues, while the "Jelajah Pakatan Harapan" nationwide roadshow was launched October 9 in Labis, Johor.

"PKR is committed to the efforts of Pakatan Harapan, to go to the ground and meet the people, to explain the issues that affect their interests.

"At the same time, the engagements with PAS will continue because it is important to mobilise all strengths and potentials from opposition parties, including those from Sabah and Sarawak, towards beating the Barisan Nasional ruling party," he said.

Until then, Saifuddin said the only political alliance PKR was a part of is Pakatan Harapan, and negotiations towards the "one-against-one" formula against BN involving all opposition parties, including PAS, would resume. – October 25, 2015.

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