

Mat Sabu warns of Isis-style thinking in PAS
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By Zulkifli Sulong

A former top PAS leader is worried that "Isis-style" thinking has infiltrated the Islamist party, and wants the authorities to step in and investigate.

Mohamad Sabu, the former PAS deputy president who left the party in September, described the spread of extremist ideology as a time bomb that was dangerous for PAS and the greater public.

It was also one of the reasons a group of PAS progressives, including him, had decided to form a new party, Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah).

Amanah is now part of the opposition pact Pakatan Harapan, while PAS is not.

Mohamad said the party's senior leadership might not even be aware of the presence of such thinking, because some members had quietly managed to go to Iraq and Syria to take up arms with Isis.

"For example in PAS we weren't aware of how some members had gone to Iraq and Syria to fight there. And then we were told that our members had gone there.

"And then there came a story of how Ustaz Lotfi (Ariffin) had died there," said Mohamad, referring to Kedah PAS member Lotfi who was killed in Syria in 2014.

He said attitudes similar to the terrorist group began infiltrating PAS some four to five years ago, which gave birth to the dangerous "takfiri" culture, or labeling other Muslims as infidels.

Mohamad said the takfiri culture was a big reason PAS had lost many of its most popular and nationally recognisable leaders, who went on to form Amanah, of which he is now president.

"I ask that a serious probe be done by the Special Branch as this is very dangerous for the country," said Mohamad, better known as Mat Sabu.

He said he suspected that an "outside entity" had brought this culture into PAS and that even its current leaders did not know this.

"Is the police unable to detect this or is there a joint conspiracy?

"Have these beliefs simply come into PAS or did someone plan for it to happen?" said Mohamad, adding that PAS's own enemies could have done it to split the Islamist party.

He said PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang would disagree with the takfiri

practice against others.

In June, Mohamad and a group of PAS leaders who dub themselves the "progressives" had lost heavily in the party's 61st elections in Kuala Selangor. They subsequently left to form Amanah.

Mohamad has spoken before of their loss in the party's polls as being the result of a culture in PAS which smeared the reputation of others.

The progressives were accused of being against the pure Islam championed by PAS, or were called pejoratives such as "liberal", "secular", "socialist" and "Shia", he said.

He said it resulted in delegates who voted in the elections becoming conditioned to disregard the contributions of these maligned leaders.

This happened to personalities such as Dr Hatta Ramli who was the party's election director, its research head Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and legal bureau chief Hanipa Maidin, Mohamad said.

Mohamad added that in his long history as a PAS member and leader, he had been defeated many times in party elections, but the name-calling and verbal abuse had never been as severe as they were this year.

"These labels are very dangerous because they carry the meaning that a person's faith has been destroyed and that all our good works for Islam are now worthless.

"This culture seems to be getting stronger," he added, noting that it has continued even after Amanah's formation where PAS's conservative leaders called members of the new party "traitors" and declared it haram (forbidden) to join the new party. – December 1, 2015.

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