

Pakatan can save Malaysia from religious extremism, says Zaid

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Zaid Ibrahim, says Barisan Nasional government has allowed playing up of racial sentiments to serve their own interests.

JOHOR BAHRU: Malaysia's multiracial way of life is threatened with an increase in religious extremism and this can only be prevented with Pakatan Harapan (PH) taking over Putrajaya in the next general election (GE14), says Zaid Ibrahim.

"If we (PH) lose, this country will become a Taliban country," the former minister said at a dinner organised by the opposition coalition in Gelang Patah tonight.

"Najib Razak will continue as prime minister and (PAS president) Abdul Hadi Awang will be his adviser.

"Your way of life will change forever," Zaid told the gathering of over 1,600 people, that was also attended by former prime minister and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman Dr Mahathir Mohamad, DAP's Gelang Patah MP Lim Kit Siang and Amanah president Mohamad Sabu.

Zaid, who joined DAP earlier this year, said the playing up of racial sentiments has become a norm under the current Barisan Nasional (BN) administration.

"Hate speeches can be heard often and certain cultural practices are being imposed on those who do not profess them.

"Some crazy groups say we should withdraw citizenship of non-Malays. Other crazy groups say only Muslims who dress like them can be prime minister."

Zaid, who was the defacto law minister in the Abdullah Ahmad Badawi cabinet, hit out at MCA and MIC, saying the BN components do not touch on the issue because they are subservient to UMNO.

"Change can only come in the form of a new government led by Pakatan Harapan," he said.

However, for the coalition to win, Chinese voters who have been loyal to the opposition in the 2008 and 2013 general elections must maintain their support, Zaid said, adding that he believed this would not be a problem.

“The Malays who voted for PAS in the last general election in May 2013 must vote for the Islamist party’s splinter Amanah.

“With Mohamad Sabu leading the party as its president, the opposition looks certain to secure the Malays votes,” he said.

“There are many Malays who want Islam, but do not want to live in a Taliban country. And some of the Malays who voted for Umno in 2013, will now vote for PKR and PPBM,” Zaid said.

“Lastly, we need to win over the Indian votes that we lost in 2013. With Zakir Naik helping BN, we will get that,” he said, in reference to controversial Indian-born preacher, Naik, who is alleged to have offended Indians by criticising Hinduism in his talks.

The Islamic Research Foundation founder, who has been given permanent residency (PR) status by the Malaysian government, is also wanted by Indian law enforcement agencies over allegations of money-laundering and for terrorism-related investigations.

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