

# Improving Relations between Islamists and Non-Muslims in Malaysia: The Case of Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS)

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## Abstract

The constitution in PAS which stipulates that all of its members are to be Muslims have induced the party into an exclusive in nature. Nevertheless, in the attempts to increase the political supports within the nation, PAS needs cooperation from the non-Muslims. In this matter, PAS has established collaboration with the non-Muslims outside of the party through the establishment of Kelab Penyokong PAS (KPP, PAS Supporter Club) in 2004 which eventually upgraded into Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS (DHPP, PAS Supporter Assembly) in 2010. This paper will explain factors that induce the political collaboration between PAS with its non-Muslims' supporters and to discuss the establishment of DHPP historically and contemporarily. These will also cover the issues as well as the challenges that echo the unique of political collaboration between PAS and non-Muslims. The findings of this writing show that political alliances helmed by PAS had successfully gained significant support from the non-Muslims. Nevertheless, PAS should give more attention to the issues arisen such as the equal status of memberships for the non-Muslims in the party as well as the level of their participations within the party, if PAS aspires to strengthen its alliances with the non-Muslims.

**Keywords:** *PAS, Muslim politics, non-Muslims, political collaboration, Kelab Penyokong PAS (KPP), Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS (DHPP)*

## INTRODUCTION

Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) has a rather unique and complex relationship with the non-Muslims. On fundamental basis, the position and the relationship between PAS and the non-Muslims can be perceived from the point of view of the memberships of the party itself. According to Act 11 in PAS Constitution, PAS members must be Muslims as well as to be officially a Malaysian and willing to submit and succumb themselves to all acts contained in the PAS Constitution, the rules, the instructions and the consensus achieved by the party from time to time. In this context, it is apparent that every single member of PAS must be of Islam as their religion. The condition stipulated in the nature of membership makes PAS as an exclusive party of whereby the participation is only open to Muslims. This exclusivity has created a unique identity for PAS as well as to all of its political affiliations. PAS has high commitment to establish an Islamic state where the *Shariah* laws are to serve as the prime guidance of the nation, laws and litigations as well as to encompass all systems in the aspired country. Although PAS is on the mission to establish an Islamic state in Malaysia, it aspires to achieve the dream in accordance to the democratic frameworks.

At the same time, PAS membership is also inclusive in nature when it is opened to all races as long as they are Muslims. This means that PAS members could now consist of those who are Malays, Chinese, Indians or any ethnic as long as they are Muslims. This criteria implies PAS as a multi-ethnic party although from one point of view, deemed as exclusive as it only accepts those who are Muslims as its members. Nevertheless, PAS is still being perceived as a Malay political party because of the majority support it receives from the Malays in comparison from the Chinese and the Indians. This can be seen via support received by PAS in the areas with population that are predominantly Malays such as in Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Perlis. PAS Secretary General Mustafa Ali (personal communication, June 17, 2014) explained this matter as per below,

From the point of view of PAS itself, due to the initial appeal of Malayness within our own society in the areas that are predominantly Malay, PAS manages to flourish in the Eastern Coast states such as Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perlis and Perak (Mustafa, 2014).

The position of PAS which is perceived as a Malay political party has its own ounce of logic due to the fact that all of its members who are Malays are Muslims. According to Act 160 (2) in the Federal Constitution, Malays are defined as those who are Muslims. Therefore, the memberships of PAS whereby most of them are Malays reflect the memberships of Muslims.

It is undeniable that PAS stoic principle that all of their members must be Muslims has engender bewildered questions of the elusive position and relationship between the party with those of non-Muslims. Does that mean that the principle acts as an axis which separates PAS with the non-Muslims and PAS does not need their support for the sake of political ambition and gains? Or on the contrary, PAS needs the non-Muslims' support even though it restricts the membership only to Muslims. The political ambition of PAS for power in the multireligious society in Malaysia requires the support of non-Muslims either from the intra and inter party's collaborations with the non-Muslim groups. This article will further explain the factors that trigger such cooperation and focus on the mutual discussions between PAS and the non-Muslims through the mechanism of intra party such as the establishment of Kelab Penyokong PAS (KPP, PAS Supporter Club) dan later Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS (DHPP, PAS Supporter Assembly). These also to be inclusive of identified issues and challenges faced throughout the cooperative discussions.

### **TRIGGERING FACTORS OF POLITICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN PAS AND NON-MUSLIMS**

There are several identified factors which influenced and triggered PAS to cooperate with the non-Muslims. The first factor is the need for PAS to increase the level of competition and chances of winning parliamentary and state assembly seats within the political environment of the country. PAS realizes the reality is that in order to be in power in Malaysia, the party needs to get supports and votes from the non Malay/Muslims. Although PAS almost possesses an equal strength as the ruling United Malays National Organization (UMNO) in terms of numbers of Malay supports, UMNO still has the edge to win the election because the party had formed coalition with other non Malay/Muslim parties like the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). The Member of Parliament for Parit and former PAS Central Committee, Mujahid Yusuf Rawa (personal communication, February 24, 2014), who is now with Parti Amanah Negara (National Trustworthy Party, PAN) formed by a spliter group of PAS leaders, explained the importance of non-Muslims' supports to PAS as such,

This is a simple matter, as long as the Chinese don't support PAS, let's just keep dreaming (of winning the election)... we can't be powerful (in power)... PAS will always be imprisoned within the cocoon of the compressed Malays (Mujahid, 2014a).

The statement by Mujahid clearly shows that PAS cannot forever be dependent solely to the support of the Malays and Muslims but on contrary needs to open to any collaboration with the non Malays/Muslim groups if they aspire to win seats and rule Malaysia. This awareness has opened up the horizon amongst the PAS members to be realistic; that is to understand the position of Malaysians as multiracial population and subsequently to embark cooperation with the non Malays/Muslim.

Second, the collaboration of PAS with the non-Muslims was initiated from the point of view of the Islamic dispersion. In this matter, Islam serves as the core of the party's mission and it influences PAS on how to approach the non Malays/Muslim, especially as Islam has no

objection for the Muslim and non-Muslim to work together in peace and spirit of humanity. The cooperation with the non-Muslims has engendered chances for PAS to preach about Islamic values and to introduce Islam in a more intimate and effective manner. The Islamic preaching however may not be accentuated with the mission to Islamicize or convert the non-Muslims.

Third, the political cooperation between PAS and the non-Muslims also deeply rooted from the attempts of the party to gain support towards the concept of Islamic Nation which happens to be the heart of PAS's mission. PAS believes that non-Muslim support is not only important to win the election, but to achieve long-term goals to uphold the Islamic State in Malaysia. Therefore, PAS sees the support of the non-Muslims as extremely essential because without their acceptance towards the concept of Islamic State, the mission and vision of PAS are neither to be crystallized. In short, all the three factors which are to improve the level of political competition, to disperse the Islamic values and teachings and to gain support towards Islamic State concept have driven PAS to seal cooperation with the non-Muslims in the country.

### **PAS'S COLLABORATION WITH KELAB PENYOKONG PAS (KPP)**

PAS had had intra party political cooperation experience with non-Muslim groups through *Chinese Consultative Council* or CCC which was established as a small Committee in PAS prior to the general election in 1986. Nevertheless, the cooperation did not last long when PAS faced devastating defeat in the election<sup>1</sup> which then resulted to the dissolution of CCC (Kamaruddin 2000). They felt that the cooperation between PAS and CCC had resulted to loss of votes and confidence of the Malays to PAS. The statement by Mujahid Yusuf Rawa (2014) is as per below,

Losing in the 1986 election, they (PAS members) blamed CCC because of the Malays desertion as they saw Chinese supporting PAS and the Malays didn't want that (Mujahid, 2014b).

According to the then PAS Vice President, Nakhaei Ahmad, the resentment towards CCC by PAS members was due to the improper planning and impatience of PAS leadership in seeing cooperation between the party and the non-Muslims sealed within a short period of time (Nakhaei, 2015). This incident should have not been realized because political cooperation will normally take some times and well-received by the supporters and voters. This had also affected the top leadership of PAS during that particular time when the President, Yusuf Rawa was pressured to abdicate his post. Mujahid stressed that one of the reasons of his resignation was the failure of cooperation with the non Muslim/Malay even though it was agreed by the PAS Committee, later unfortunately disfavored by the same committee. He perceived this commotion as disrespectful towards his leadership (Mujahid, 2010: 86).

After the fiasco with CCC, PAS has rekindled the political cooperation. But after the impeachment of Anwar Ibrahim, PAS employed a more structured strategy to attract the non-Muslims. The reform movement or *Reformasi* on that particular time had engendered a new kind of political approach, which is color blind disregarding racial motivation. Thus, PAS used this golden opportunity to approach the non-Muslims especially the Chinese in gaining supports. PAS which has been fighting on issues such as democracy, justice and human rights eventually managed to attract the attention and interest of the Chinese community in particular. In order to cater to the overwhelming response, PAS established the Urusetia Hal Ehwat Masyarakat Cina (UHEMC, Secretariat for Chinese Affairs) on May 1999<sup>2</sup>, which was

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<sup>1</sup> PAS only won a parliamentary seat in Pengkalan Chepa via Nik Arshad Abdullah. In the election, Nik Arshad defeated candidate from Barisan Nasional (BN) with 17,501 votes.

<sup>2</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> PAS Committee Members Meeting Reminder, 1999-2000 Session on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1999.

earlier than the establishment of KPP in the year 2004 and (DHPP) in the year 2010. UHEMC was established on the fundamental point of Islamic dispersion, driven by the mission to preach and explain about Islam to the Chinese community. For PAS, Islam is a religion that brings blessing to everyone; not just for Muslims but for the non-Muslims as well.

At the same time, the establishment of UHEMC also was driven by the fact to explain the concept of Islamic State which has been the heart of PAS's mission to the non-Muslims so that a clearer perspective can be explained to them and not to be misunderstood. The non-Muslim groups must be given in-depth understanding that the concept of Islamic State upheld by PAS is suitable to be implemented within the context of multiracial and multireligion society and will not jeopardize or discriminate any of the non-Muslims' rights at any cost. This is important because PAS need the support of the non-Muslim groups not merely for the short term effect which is to win the election but also for the longer term effect; that is to establish an Islamic State in Malaysia in the future (Eksklusif, 1999a) While officiating UHEMC, PAS President Fadzil Mohd Noor was quoted of saying that he believed the establishment of this committee would enhance the attempts to gain the support of the non-Muslim groups when the in-depth explanations and knowledge about Islam and PAS's real missions are conveyed to these groups.

UHEMC is helmed by several non-Malay Chinese Muslim individuals. It is led by Anuar Tan<sup>3</sup>, who was the ex-Vice Youth Leader of Gerakan Malaysia and a committee member of Kota Bharu City Council. Anuar was assisted by Kamal Koh who was appointed as the Secretary of Committee. Kamal is PAS activist since 1985 and hold several important designations in the party at branches and state levels. Some of the designations hold by Kamal Koh were the Head of Wangsa Maju Branch 1986, a member for Central PAS (The Interstates Affair) 1989 and the Deputy Commissioner 2 for PAS Federal Territory (Charity and Social) (Eksklusif, 1999b). The UHEMC strategies were mainly centralized to the attempts to educate the Chinese about Islam especially via publications. According to Kamal, the Chinese need education and explanation about Islam and these can be achieved by multiplying the publications about Islam in Mandarin, apart from English. Moreover, the older generation who are not studying in the university are not fluent in Malay and are not good at reading the Malay language. Other than that, books which discussed about Islamic philosophies and relationship with the non-Muslims must also be translated in order to diversify the existing reading materials. Kamal explained this matter as such

We realized that the Chinese love to do research about any particular things. Therefore, they need to read a lot of Islamic reading materials. So, it is the publication's responsibility to produce the translated reading materials about Islam in the Chinese Language. In order to introduce Islam to the Chinese, the existence of reading materials is important. We try to find a lot of suitable materials for the Chinese. The process of translating books and reading materials into Chinese Language must be accelerated, I guess. I myself would choose the titles of the books. Some of them which are in the pipelines are *Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Islam: Satu Perbandingan* (Human Rights in Islam: A Comparison), written by Ustaz Md Akhir Yacob and *Cara Hidup Islam* (Islam's Way of Life), written by al-Maududi and *Ma'alim Fittoriq* (Hurdles all the way), by Syed Qutb (Eksklusif, 1999b).

What is important is that through these series of explanations and publications, the Chinese will be able to be introduced towards a genuine visualization of real Islam and this may dissolve all the ambiguities and negative perceptions embedded in the minds of the Chinese community. Apart from that, these explanations are also important as standing point to erect the fact that PAS is not an extreme or antiquated-minded political party (Eksklusif,

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<sup>3</sup> The original name of Anuar Tan is Tan Teng Loon @ Anuar Tan b. Abdullah @ Anuar Tan. Refer to General Election 1999 Report, Election Commission of Malaysia, 2002.

1999b). As a political party which emphasizes Islam as the heart of its missions and visions, perception towards Islam itself must be corrected because if the negative perception is prolonged, it will affect Islam as a whole.

The cooperation of PAS with the non-Muslim groups transcended to a higher level when the Head of The Chinese Affairs, Anuar Tan was chosen as the PAS candidate for State Legislative Assembly (DUN), Kota Lama (N.8) in Kota Bharu during the general election in 1999. In the election per se, Anuar defeated BN candidate, Leong Su Siong with majority of mere 445 votes<sup>4</sup>. Anuar gained 8,470 votes whereas Leong Su Siong only managed to gain 8,025 votes. Anuar's victory in the election is perceived as a significant achievement in the context of cooperation cemented between PAS and the non-Muslims as he was the first non Malay PAS candidate in the history of Malaysian elections<sup>5</sup>. This also reflected the confidence and recognition bestowed by PAS to its non Malay candidate. The victory of Anuar Tan as the member of State Legislative Assembly (ADUN) has significant effect on the PAS's attempts to gain the support of the non-Muslims especially in Kelantan<sup>6</sup>. Anuar was assisted by several non-Muslim individuals such as Hu Pang Chaw<sup>7</sup> who was appointed as the member of Kota Bharu City Council (MPKB) from 1999 till 2004<sup>8</sup>. Whatever it is, the establishment of The Chinese Affair Committee has served to be as platform that is important for PAS to improve its relationship with the non-Muslims.

When DAP withdrew from the Alternative Front on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2001, it certainly raised eyebrows and questions about the future relationship of PAS with the non-Muslim groups. Nevertheless, PAS has proven that although without DAP, the party is still interested to continue cooperating with the non-Muslims via the internal or the intra-party approaches by establishing the KPP. The attempts to assemble PAS supporters from the non-Muslims commenced every since the establishment of The Chinese Affairs Committee in 1999. The attempt is further accelerated by the PAS Youth Wing in the year 2001 via the The Head of National Integration Committee, Mujahid Yusuf Rawa who initiated dialogue and discussion with United Chinese School Committees' Association of Malaysia (Jiao Zong). According to Mujahid, this dialogue served to be an attempt to break the wall of relationship between PAS and the non-Muslim/Malay.

In the year 2004, at the dawn of the 11<sup>th</sup> General Election, KPP was established with the mission to achieve and to assemble support from the non-Muslim groups<sup>9</sup>. This club was also on the mission to approach the Chinese and DAP<sup>10</sup>. KPP was officiated by the Acting President, Tuan Guru Abdul Hadi Awang. Hu Pang Chaw was appointed as the Head of the club. In the premature stage of KPP establishment, the acceptance of the non-Muslims especially the Chinese was still scarce. During the officiating ceremony, Hu Pang Chaw claimed that no more than five Chinese attended the event due to the existing prejudice that was still overwhelming amongst the Chinese during that point of time.

The establishment of KPP did not affect achievement of PAS in the general election in 2004. PAS failed to maintain its big victory in the general election in 2004 with merely six

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<sup>4</sup> Leong Su Siang won the Kota Lama seat in General Election 1995 by defeating the BERJASA candidate, Mohd Yusoff@Yusof bin Haji Mojd Nor with majority of 1676. Refer to General Election 1995 Report, Election Commission of Malaysia, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> According to the interview of researcher with The Head of Dewan Hubungan Penyokong PAS (DHPP), Hu Pang Chaw, the winning of PAS in Kota Lama was largely depending on the personality and charisma of Anuar Tan as opposed to the Chinese voters' acceptance towards PAS's missions.

<sup>6</sup> Anuar also was appointed as the PAS Central Committee Member to assist PAS to approach the Chinese. Refer to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Central PAS Tasks Committee Meeting Minute, 2001-2003 Session on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Hu Pang Chaw was an ex MCA member and a reporter and did a lot of coverage on Anuar. According to him, this angered MCA and eventually he was transferred to Raub. Therefore, he resigned his job as reporter and works full time to assist Anuar as member of MPKB.

<sup>8</sup> Hu Pang Chaw told researcher that the attempts to attract the support of the Chinese were done by approaching the traders via MKPB.

<sup>9</sup> Buku Cenderamata Majlis Pelancaran Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010.

<sup>10</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Central PAS Daily Committee Meeting Minute, Year 2004-2005 on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

parliamentary seats won<sup>11</sup> as compared to the 27 seats in the general election in 1999<sup>12</sup>. PAS also only managed to win 36 State Legislative Assembly (DUN) seats as opposed to the 98 seats won in 1999<sup>13</sup>. According to Hu Pang Chaw, the premature age of KPP was identified as one of the factors that did not contribute much in political campaigning for PAS. He also admitted the bigger factor that newly appointed Prime Minister and President of BN Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who was perceived as a politically-correct leader (dubbed as Mr. Clean) played essential role for the success of BN in the general election. After the general election in 2004, KPP has accelerated its activities via dialogue sessions and mini discussions with Chinese societies, journalists as well as the academicians. According to Mujahid, the dialogue was meant to strive the attempts to improve perceptions towards the aspirations and missions shouldered by PAS. He added, that PAS is not a racist party but on contrary, but it has opened doors to everyone. That is definitely in line with the essence of Islam which projects by PAS.

The same attempt was made when a group of Chinese community was brought to Kelantan and had a dialogue with the Menteri Besar (Chief Minister), Nik Aziz Nik Mat. In the dialogue, they consensually agreed that PAS is a harmony-loving party, practices friendly approach towards non Muslims and this was proven when they were brought to Kelantan by PAS to have the dialogue session (Hu, 2014a). They also saw that the preaching of Islam helmed by PAS is of moderate nature and not as far-fetched as what they have been hearing prior to the dialogue. Hu Pang Chaw explained this matter as such,

In 2004, we brought a group of Chinese to Kelantan to have dialogue with Tok Guru Nik Aziz. We went to deep rooted affair and dealt with the local people, we went to the temple. They now had a clearer picture of how Kelantan governed and treated the Chinese and the non-Malay. Some of the MCA supporters went back and lashed back at MCA for feeding them with lies all these while, they saw Chinese in Kelantan were happy and not being oppressed. The Chinese liked Kelantan. The MCA supporter lashed back at the MCA leaders (Hu, 2014a).

PAS had launched the slogan *PAS For All*<sup>14</sup> on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007 as a campaign to accelerate the support of the non Muslim/Malay. This subsequently went in line with PAS's ambition to become an inclusive party as well as opened to all races. The launching date on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007 was purposely chosen in order to commemorate the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 tragedy which was the infamous destruction of World Trade Center by the terrorists. According to Hu Pang Chaw, the date was chosen to prove that Islam is not an intimidating and fearful religion but a faith that is both respectable and can be embraced by all (Hu, 2014b). On that particular time, KPP also launched a bulletin in Chinese Language called *Ren Min Shi Shi* which means The Current Bulletin for The People. This bulletin exhibited activities conducted by PAS especially of all those that involved the Chinese, apart from the news on regards of the state of Kelantan, the only state ruled by PAS. In the early stage, this bulletin was distributed for free about 3,000 copies.

Due to the immense positive response, the quantity of publication was increased to 50,000 copies distributed for free. Nevertheless, the longevity of the bulletin was severed when it was stopped by the Ministry of Home Affairs after the permit ended during the 2007 Annual PAS Assembly in Kedah. The publication of the bulletin also was put on halt due to the financial

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<sup>11</sup> Six parliamentary seats were all in Kelantan such as Tumpat, Pengkalan Chepa, Pasir Mas, Rantau Panjang, Kubang Kerian and Pasir Putih.

<sup>12</sup> The failure also resulted to PAS losing the designation as Head of The Opposition in the parliament and was given back to DAP representative, Lim Kit Siang.

<sup>13</sup> PAS lost Terengganu and administered the state only for one term when it only managed to win 4 states seats as opposed to the Barisan Nasional with 28 states seats. Terengganu won in Wakaf Mempelam Legislative State Assembly (DUN) (Mohd Abdul Wahid Endut), Batu Buruk (Wan Abdul Mutalib Embung), Rhu Rendang (Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang) and Manir (Datuk Harun Taib).

<sup>14</sup> PAS for All is the chosen slogan in a competition conducted by The National Integration Lajnah. The aim was to obtain a logo and emblem to promote PAS as a party that emphasizes national integration. The slogan also served as the theme for PAS Annual Muktamar in Ipoh on 2008.

setback as well<sup>15</sup>. Hu Pang Chaw admitted that it was unfortunate that the bulletin had to be stopped because it was successful in bridging the gap between PAS and the Chinese community.

It is undeniable that at the beginning, the cooperation between PAS and the non-Muslims was mainly focused on the Chinese. Nonetheless, the involvement of the Indians became more apparent when the *Hindu Rights Action Force* or HINDRAF voiced out their dissatisfactions over the marginalization of Indian community<sup>16</sup>. According to Mujahid, when HINDRAF emerged, the Indians began to show support and joined the KPP. The recognition by PAS towards the non-Muslim/Malay especially for the Indians was made apparent when Kumutha a/p Rahman, a Hindu, was chosen to represent PAS in (N.40) Tiram Legislative State Assembly (DUN) during the General Election 2008. Nevertheless, she was defeated by the BN candidate, Maulizan bin Bujang when she only managed to get 8,827 votes as opposed to Maulizan who gained 17,005 votes with majority of 8,178 votes<sup>17</sup>. The Johore PAS Commissioner Mahfodz Mohamed evaluated Kumutha's candidacy as proof that PAS would also have given place for the non-Muslim supporters to represent the party and subsequently being opened to all races (Anon, 2008). He added that Kumutha's selection exhibited the willingness for PAS to open its door to women although she was merely from the KPP.

Throughout the establishment of KPP, it had successfully organized two conventions which were able to assemble representations consisting of the non-Muslim/Malay PAS supporters. The first convention was held in Penang with the theme 'A Charitable Government For All' and was officiated by the Vice President, Nasharuddin Mat Isa. The second convention was held in May 2009 at Tanah Kelang Office Complex with the theme 'Stay United, Brave The Challenger' and was officiated by PAS, Supreme Leader and Kelantan Chief Minister, Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat. In the second convention, several resolutions were achieved, and some of them were to restructure the KPP leadership, to update the membership data and to solidify KPP so that its role can be strengthened and empowered in PAS.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEWAN HIMPUNAN PENYOKONG PAS (DHPP)

The result of General Election 2008 saw the opposition team successfully took over the government of five states, which were Kelantan, Kedah, Penang, Selangor and Perak<sup>18</sup>. They were also able to secure 82 parliamentary seats as compared to 19 in General Election 2004<sup>19</sup>. A year after the General Election 2008 witnessed improved response and support among non-Muslims towards KPP. According to Mujahid, KPP members were tantamount to 20,000 people. In resonance of the KPP Convention resolution, PAS agreed to the plan to upgrade KPP and hence, three options were made available to restructure the club including to determine the membership of the non-Muslim supporters in the party. The three ideas were, one; to absorb KPP members as party members, two; to maintain the KPP existing identity and three; to establish an Assembly as a new wing catered for membership to the non-Muslim supporters. These options were discussed in the paperwork entitled 'The Membership of The Non-Muslims In PAS Organization' which was presented by Mujahid himself as the Head of National Integration Lajnah during the party retreat in Langkawi on December 2008<sup>20</sup>. All the options were discussed in-depth and subsequently the idea to establish Dewan as a new wing

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<sup>15</sup> According to Hu Pang Chaw, the bulletin only reached four or five publications.

<sup>16</sup> HINDRAF is a consolidated movement claimed to be consisted of 30 NGOs and in the attempt to fight for the Indians' society and their heritages within the demography of multiracial Malaysians.

<sup>17</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> General Election, 2008, Election Commission of Malaysia, p. 285

<sup>18</sup> Barisan Nasional managed to take over the Perak administration when four members of Legislative State Assembly (DUN) from PKR and DAP switched parties and professed the untrustworthiness to the ruling state government consisted of the opposition parties.

<sup>19</sup> DAP won 12 parliamentary seats whereas PAS and DAP respectively only managed to gain six seats and one seat only.

<sup>20</sup> Buku Cenderamata Majlis Pelancaran Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010.

catered for membership to the non-Muslim supporters was selected as the new KPP structure. The statement made by Mujahid clearly defined the situation as per below,

I gave three options to the party. First, maintain the KPP. Second, open membership to all non-Muslims and they become a full-fledged member. This is quite sensitive. That is because one of the requirements to become a PAS member is that you have to be a Muslim. Thirdly, to establish a new special wing for the non-Muslims. And they become the members of that wing (Mujahid 2014c).

This consensus clearly reflected that PAS recognized the roles played by the non-Muslim supporters and this was translated by the willingness of PAS to prepare them a more significant platform to voice their thoughts. When this consensus was agreed, the efforts to construct the rules and regulations were geared up. This is because before the new wing to be launched, there have to be some stipulated laws and regulations so that the validity of the new wing is recognized from the point of view of litigation and constitution. The late Hassan Shukri was appointed as the Head of Technical Committee and he was assisted by Hanipa Maidin, Asmuni Awi and Mahfodz Mohamed. On 10<sup>th</sup> January 2010, The Central Committees Meeting had passed the Rules and Regulation draft and this served as a benchmark that the plan to absorb KPP to become DHPP<sup>21</sup>. In the end on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010, DHPP was launched by PAS President, Abdul Hadi Awang at Multipurpose Hall, The Klang District and Land Office. The existence of DHPP is perceived as a strategic attempt of PAS in cementing cooperation with the non Muslim/Malay. DHPP was earmarked as the platform that could foster integration amongst the multiracial supporters and also to signify that PAS has the capability to integrate multiracial Malaysians through this newly established wing<sup>22</sup>.

Although DHPP is a new wing under PAS, apart from Muslim Scholars Assembly, Women Assembly and Youth Assembly, the members of DHPP were yet to be immersed as PAS full membership due to the requirement stipulated in PAS constitution that one has to be a Muslim in order to be a PAS member, and that was yet to be amended. The Act 11 PAS Constitution clearly stated that the requirement to be a PAS member are to be a Malaysian, a recognized 'come-of-age' Muslims in accordance to Shariah Law. Nevertheless, DHPP members were bound to the Rules and Regulation because they already took the Oath of Loyalty, that is to uphold and oblige the principles as well as the missions of the party, to respect all the decisions made by the leaderships of the party and Assembly, to uphold the genuine definition of integration within party and nation, to respect all rules and regulations of Assembly which serve as guidance for the members to maintain the good name of PAS and its missions<sup>23</sup>. This means that, a DHPP members has an equal responsibility as per a PAS member.

In the General Election 2013, PAS put three candidates from DHPP to compete under the umbrella of the party and they were Hu Pang Chaw for P.148 Ayer Hitam Parliament, Kumutha a/p Rahman at Tiram Legislative State Assembly (DUN) and Wong Chee Chew at Asahan Legislative State Assembly (DUN). According to Mujahid, this was the epitome of PAS biggest success in the history of its cooperation with the non Muslims/Malay because it marked that the DHPP members have already gained the trust of the party to compete in the election (Mujahid, 2014d). During the General Election 2008, PAS merely put one non-Muslim candidate but the number increased to three candidates for the General Election 2013. Although all three candidates were defeated by their respective opponents, this marked another milestone achievement in the history of PAS non Muslim/Malay candidacies selection<sup>24</sup>. Kumutha who competed in the General Election 2008, recontested and successfully reduced the BN majority up to 735 votes during the General Election 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Buku Cenderamata Majlis Pelancaran Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Buku Cenderamata Majlis Pelancaran Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Refer to Oath of Loyalty for DHPP members.

<sup>24</sup> Hu Pang Chaw managed to gain 14,735 votes and lost to BN candidate Wee Ka Siong who gained 22,045 votes. Wee Ka Siong won with majority of 7,310 votes. Whereas Kumutha a/p Rahman gained memperoleh



## CHALLENGES DAN ISSUES OF POLITICAL COOPERATION BY PAS WITH NON-MUSLIMS

On whole, PAS put a solid foundation and exhibited progress in its cooperation the non-Muslims via the establishment of KPP and DHPP. The decision of PAS to upgrade the status of KPP to DHPP has clearly illustrating the recognition towards the position and the roles played by the non-Muslims in the party. It also shows that the support of the non-Muslims to PAS is exponentially increasing and becoming more significant. To put non-Muslim as the candidate in the election is deemed as the party's highest achievement in its history of cooperation with the non-Muslims. In short, it proves that PAS is not an exclusive party for only Muslims but its also opened its door for the non-Muslims as well. Subsequently, this portrayed good image and reputation for PAS as a dynamic political party.

Nevertheless, these cooperations with the non-Muslims were not enclaves from issues and challenges. These attempts have opened polemics and expressions towards the upcoming cooperation of PAS with the non-Muslims. Some of the hottest issues due to the controversial cooperations were about the status and the membership of the non-Muslims in PAS and secondly, the level of their political participation in the party. It is undeniable that the issues pertaining the membership of the non-Muslims have always invited criticisms against PAS. In resolving this matter, PAS had taken a diplomatic approach by saying that the party would look into the position of the non-Muslims in the party but unfortunately proved to no avail due to the constraint in the PAS constitution, which requires all PAS members to be a Muslim and this restricts the non-Muslims to be absorbed as full-fledged members. Therefore, to accept the non-Muslims as members, PAS needs to amend its constitution. Under the same token when PAS was given the choice to upgrade the status of KPP, the party was unable to absorb the non-Muslim members as full-fledged PAS members but only managed to establish another bigger platform for them, and that was DHPP as associate members.

The acceptance of non-Muslim supporters as full-fledged members is not only contradictory to PAS Constitution but also under the straining critical eyes of several PAS members because this would illustrate an equivalent status between the existing PAS members with the non-Muslims. There was also a more diplomatic opinion which suggested that full-fledged membership shall be opened to the non-Muslims but President and Vice President are to remain exclusive for the Muslims. Nevertheless, this suggestion was brushed off by the party. Other than that, there was also an alternative opinion suggesting that the non-Muslims are to be made as members of the alliance and this was further discussed in the PAS General Assembly. According to Mujahid, the non-Muslims can be appointed as members of the alliance and PAS would monitor the progress (Siasah 2008). Nevertheless, the suggestion would only engender to the scenario where the non-Muslim supporters are to be second class members of the party and this is definitely an insult to them.<sup>25</sup> On the resonance of this matter, Mustafa Ali said, *"If we accept the non-Muslims as only the members of the alliance, this means that we have put them as second class members of the party. If that is the case, might as well we are done with the idea"*<sup>26</sup>. This sentiment was also agreed by the late Azizan Abdul Razak saying that the issues about members of the alliance are no priorities to be discussed but on the contrary, PAS needs to maximize the support of the Muslims towards the party.<sup>27</sup>

The above-mentioned polemics clearly showed that PAS has yet to solve the issues on memberships of the non-Muslim in a stricter manner. This subsequently engender dilemmas amongst the PAS members and the non-Muslim supporters. According to the Head

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16,273 votes and lost to BN candidate, Maulizan Bujang who gained 23,716 votes. Maulizan won with majority of 7,443 votes. Wong Chee Chew gained 4,400 votes and lost to BN candidate, Abdul Ghaffar bin Atan who gained 8,257 votes. Abdul Gaffar won with majority of 3,857 votes.

<sup>25</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> PAS Committee Members Meeting Reminder, (1998-1999), 13<sup>th</sup> December 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> PAS Committee Members Meeting Reminder, (1998-1999), 13<sup>th</sup> December 1998.

of DHPP, Hu Pang Chaw, PAS is still unwilling to accept the non-Muslims as the members. He explained that PAS may perhaps accept the non-Muslims as the members in the upcoming 20 years from now (Hu, 2014c). Nevertheless what is the most important thing now is that PAS has prepared a bigger space for DHPP to execute the function and to contribute to the party.

Apart from that, the role and the participation of non-Muslims in PAS is still far from crystallization. According to Mujahid, he proposed that every states to put a non-Muslim candidate in the election (Mujahid, 2014e). Nevertheless in the General Election 2013, there were only two states with non-Muslim candidates, from Johore and Melaka. At the same time, he also targetted that the members of DHPP to be given important roles at the level of villages, districts and other designations that are deemed significant. Only through this way that the non-Muslim supporters are able to effectively participate and what is more important is that PAS would not have to depend on other opposition component parties, the DAP and PKR in particular, anymore.

## CONCLUSION

As the conclusion, PAS has a good history of cooperation with the non Muslims through the establishment of KPP and DHPP. Nevertheless, PAS needs to ensure the level of intra political cooperation of this party to be in constant high momentum and must not be antiquated-thinking or refuse to venture out from the cocoon. The good impact engendered from the establishment of KPP and DHPP in gaining the attraction of the non-Muslims must be retained and accelerated. At the same time, PAS needs to seriously pay more attention towards the issues and challenges as per discussed in this writing, such as the membership of non-Muslims and the roles as well as the level of their political participation in PAS itself. These are buttressed by the failure of PAS political cooperation with DAP, right after The 61st PAS Annual General Assembly and it showed that PAS needs to solidify DHPP in order to retain the support of the non-Muslims. At the same time, PAS should strengthen leadership of DHPP especially after the chairman (Hu Pang Chaw) has left PAS and join the new party, Amanah. If PAS fails to manage its cooperation with DHPP, it is possible that the party would lose the support of the non-Muslims in the future, especially prior to the upcoming 14<sup>th</sup> General Election.

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