

# Malaysia: PSM wants alternatives to 'Malay unity'

Wednesday 6 November 2019, by [Malaysiakini](#) (Date first published: 15 September 2019).

**Pakatan Harapan and the PAS-Umno alliance may have put their own spin on the realignment of national politics in the country but PSM believes the inking of a political charter between the country's two largest Malays parties should not be dismissed.**

PSM deputy chairperson S Arutchelvan said while the notion of Muslim unity may appeal to certain segments, Harapan needs to ensure it does not push the electorate to the new alliance due to its own failings.

He said while Harapan has fulfilled some of its promises, it has also unnecessarily gotten bogged down by unpopular issues such as trying to push through international treaties, trying to introduce Jawi lessons and the third national car, to name a few.

"In Harapan's manifesto, there were no such demands by the people yet they pushed for them and paid the consequences.

"Meanwhile, important issues such as the abolition of toll, the opposition towards Lynas and the (postponement) of PTPTN loans, which were key issues promised by Harapan have seen U-turns," Arutchelvan said in a statement.

He added that the few good things that Harapan has pushed through, meanwhile, has been overshadowed.

"Harapan has indeed carried out the main gist of its manifesto promises such as managing the rising cost of living, reducing the prime minister's powers, combating corruption, ending industry monopolies such as Bernas and Astro.

"Even though Harapan has brought some benefit to the people, such as the MySalam insurance scheme and the construction of affordable housing, but the effectiveness of these efforts is not clear and is overshadowed by racial and religious issues which have become the main agenda," Arutchelvan said.

He pointed out that there are also other simmering issues, such as the possible end of the pension scheme, the low-profile scaling back of welfare benefits and struggling farmers and fishermen.

"The increase of support for Umno and PAS is due to the people struggling to make ends meet.

"This is felt by all races but is being misdirected into a narrow racial agenda.

"Harapan must overcome this by finding an economic solution based on the principle of helping all those who are in need of aid," he said.

Arutchelvan commended Harapan Youth's statement that the Umno-PAS union should not distract the coalition.

"Harapan should respect their political opponents and not assume the people are stupid.

"The Umno-PAS cooperation has entered a new phase and should not be ignored or belittled. Harapan has no choice but to work harder to win people over," he said.

Yesterday, Umno and PAS [inked a charter](#) to formalise their political cooperation in Kuala Lumpur, witnessed by thousands of supporters from both parties.

On the same day, Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad chaired a special cabinet meeting on closing the [income disparity](#) in the country as part of its "shared prosperity" vision, which implementation has not been as fast as hoped.

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## P.S.

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## Support the ESSF Asia Permanent Solidarity Fund - Even "small" donations help!

Here we are with our annual appeal for the ESSF solidarity fund. We've already used almost all of our resources for 2019, and we need to prepare for 2020.

Over the last 12 years, ESSF has built unique solidarity relations in Asia. The calamitous situation in many countries is going to get worse. On October 29<sup>th</sup>, *Nature Communications* reported on a new study suggesting that the rise in sea levels will claim three times more victims than previously thought; mostly in eastern Asia. [\[1\]](#).

In the face of the increasingly urgent needs, **we are determined to increase the number of our donors, recognising that no donation is too small**. The number of donors is politically important. Each new donor is a confirmation of our solidarity with those facing disasters, a welcome encouragement. And taken together, "small" donations have enabled us to provide significant support to grassroots initiatives.

If you can contribute large sums, all the better! But do not give up the solidarity fund because you would judge the amount of your contribution too insignificant. Our minimum solidarity commitment is €500 - that's only 10 donations of €50. A basic standard bank transfer to our partners amounts to €1,000 - that's only 10 donations of €100.

ESSF works on a completely volunteer basis. **It means that 100% of the donations received are actually transferred to our partners abroad**. The costs related to these transfers are mostly bank

charges and reduced to a minimum (less than 5%).

Each year brings new ad hoc solidarity campaigns in response to urgent developments. But we also have ongoing engagements in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan and the Philippines. ESSF doesn't 'export' know-how, we don't manage our own projects. Instead, we support our movement partners in their response to local humanitarian, social and democratic crises. They take the lead in defining the needs, and the strategy to be followed. Our partners include the MiHands coalition of civil society groups in Mindanao, southern Philippines, the Free Women movement in Indonesia, the BKF-BKS peasant movements in Bangladesh and a network of popular movements in Pakistan.

These partners are facing increasingly difficult conditions, ranging from martial law in Mindanao to the violence of labour and social relations in Bangladesh, growing threat of Islamist aggression against progressives in Indonesia (particularly women and LGBT+ activists), and attacks from fundamentalists and from the secret services in Pakistan...

The conditions under which our partners act are increasingly difficult: martial law in Mindanao, extreme violence in social relations in Bangladesh, the rise of aggressive Islamism in Indonesia (particularly targeting women and LGBT +), crossfire Special Services and Fundamentalists in Pakistan ... So we need to fully consider the issue of the security of our partners.

Alongside the authoritarian radicalisation of local regimes, our partners suffer from the local impact of the USA-China conflict, as well as the complex ecological crisis, of which global warming is only one aspect. All this increases social conflicts particularly between peasants and big landowners.

We ask you to join us by making a donation - small or large - one-off or regular to the ESSF Permanent Solidarity Fund.

We warmly thank all those who are renewing their donations, as well as all those joining us for the first time!

**Pierre Rousset and Adam Novak**  
**ESSF**

*ESSF does not receive any subsidies.*

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We keep you regularly informed via our website of the situation and use of the solidarity fund.

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**Footnotes**

[1] <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-12808-z>