

| Open contests a must to endorse PRS leadership, says don

BY CHURCHILL EDWARD ON MAY 9, 2025, FRIDAY AT 7:00 AM

SARAWAK

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Jayum says Masing—PRS' founder and first president—had held open contests in every Triennial Delegates Conference (TDC) since the party's establishment in 2004.

KUCHING (May 9): Parti Rakyat Sarawak (PRS) ought to emulate their former president, the late Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr James Jemut Masing, in subscribing to democratic principles by calling for open contests in the party, said Datuk Dr Jayum Jawan Empaling.

The political scientist and Academy of Sciences Malaysia Fellow said Masing—PRS' founder and first president—had held open contests in every Triennial Delegates Conference (TDC) since the party's establishment in 2004.

“Contests for positions in the party were held in 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016. The only exception was in 2022 when, following Masing’s demise, the supreme council decided to maintain the leadership status quo after reaching a compromise,” he told The Borneo Post when contacted yesterday.

He was asked for his take on PRS’ TDC scheduled to take place this October, with the party yet to announce whether open contests would be held.

Jayum said should PRS decide in favour of holding open contests, the winners would not necessarily be the best or most qualified person, but rather the most popular or well-liked by the grassroots.

“It’s also about respect, which equates to being well accepted across the grassroots. The late Masing had this.

“How else could he lead the party for almost two decades if not for his knowledge, experience, charisma and wisdom?”

Jayum said Masing’s only fault was not to have in place a clear succession plan, although he was said to have favoured one person among his inner circle whom he saw as having clear leadership potential among the many PRS lawmakers.

“Unfortunately, Masing himself expressed reservation on whether this person would be able to draw support from the many competing aspirants,” he claimed.

In moving forward, Jayum said PRS has no choice but to hold open contests in the upcoming TDC to endorse its leadership.

He suggested PRS hold open forums where aspiring candidates can present their visions and plans for the party.

“It is important for party members to assess the quality of candidates that they are going to elect,” he said.

He stressed that reaching a compromise on the party’s leadership, such as in 2022, would deny members their right to elect their leaders, including the president.

“Anyone involved in this move (compromise) is unworthy of being elected to any position in the party, let alone party president. Engineering a compromise is tantamount to sweeping problems under the carpet.

“This is not the way to resolve issues within the party, especially if the current PRS leaders want to strengthen the party and emerge from the shadow of the late Masing,” said Jayum.

James Masing	Jayum Jawan Empaling	party election	PRS	TDC
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