

# First step to ending Sabah crisis

By ZAINON AHMAD

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**KOTA KINABALU, Mon.** — The three main political parties in Sabah, the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS), Usno and Berjaya, have agreed to “co-operate” under a formula provided by the Prime Minister today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad hoped the acceptance of the formula and its finalisation later would end the tension and uncertainty in the State.

The acceptance of the formula, worked out by the Umno Supreme Council at its six-hour meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, is seen as the first positive development in the efforts to resolve the prolonged political unrest in Sabah.

The Prime Minister, who flew in this morning for a six-hour visit, told reporters before returning to Kuala Lumpur that he did not rule out the possibility of a coalition Government after the coming State elections.

The sharing of power and the distribution of State ministerial positions would depend “on the performance” of the parties.

However, under the formula, PBS president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan, would remain Chief Minister.

Dr Mahathir did not disclose details of the formula, saying the leaders, whom he met separately at a hotel, must be given time to brief their members.

“They — Datuk Pairin, Usno president Tun Mustapha Datu Harun and Berjaya president Datuk Mohamed Noor Mansoor — have accepted the formula in principle,” he said.

The Prime Minister hoped the agreement involving the three parties, to be finalised in Kuala Lumpur later this week, would allow the situation in Sabah to return to normal.

The PBS, which came to power after winning a narrow majority in the April elections, found itself being constantly challenged by Usno and

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says PM  
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Berjaya.

Recently, after only about 10 months in power, Datuk Pairin opted to have the State Assembly dissolved and go back to the electorate for a fresh mandate.

Since then, there has been tension in the State, with a spate of bombings, demonstrations and riots.

The Prime Minister, who was briefed on the security situation at the police headquarters in Kepyayan, hoped "political and economic stability" would return to the State.

He was confident the police would be able to handle the situation without any special powers.

"There will be no emergency rule in Sabah," he said.

He was sad over the recent incidents in Sabah which had affected the good image of the country and said they should not have occurred.

The Prime Minister also said all foreign workers without work permits would be asked to leave the State.

After the briefing, Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datuk Pairin, was driven around the town and areas hit by the recent spate of bombings were pointed out to him.

He got down at the Kar-amunsing warehouse complex, the scene of Wednesday's rioting, where two people died and \$6.3 million worth of property was destroyed by fire.

He was briefed on what happened by State Commissioner of Police Haji Ahmad Maulana Babjee.

Barisan Nasional secretary-general Ghafar Baba attended the meeting with the leaders of the three parties.

Dr Mahathir said he was confident the solution he had proposed would "generally satisfy" all the parties.

He said in all compromises before an agreement, some parties might have to make sacrifices.

Asked for his comment on the Usno writ, he said: "The solution will be conditional on all court cases being ended."

According to sources, the agreement is likely to lead to PBS and Usno being admitted into the Barisan Nasional.

However, during the State elections the parties would contest under their own symbols to determine the strength of their participation in the Government to be formed subsequently.

Asked about his response to the formula, Datuk Pairin told reporters later that he was very happy indeed.