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MAHATHIR-MEMBERS  
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 17 (BERNAMA) -- UMNO HEADQUARTERS HAS SENT LETTERS TO OLD MEMBERS OF THE PARTY URGING THEM TO FURNISH PROOF THAT THEY WERE MEMBERS OF UMNO BEFORE IT WAS RULED UNLAWFUL, UMNO PRESIDENT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

SUCH PROOF WAS NECESSARY TO ENABLE THE PARTY TO REGAIN ITS ASSETS, HE TOLD REPORTERS WHEN ELABORATING ON HIS POLICY ADDRESS AT THE UMNO GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO OPENED THE ASSEMBLY, HAD SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO REGAIN UMNO ASSETS BECAUSE UMNO'S MEMBERSHIP PREVIOUSLY PUT AT 1.4 MILLION WAS HARD TO PROVE.

+THOUGH WE KNOW THAT MORE THAN 900,000 OF THE 1.3 MILLION UMNO MEMBERS AT PRESENT WERE FORMER MEMBERS, PROOF OF THE 900,000 MEMBERSHIP IS DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN FOR ACCEPTANCE BY THE COURT,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID UMNO HEADQUARTERS WAS STUDYING THE BEST WAY OF GETTING PROOF OF THE ACTUAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE OLD UMNO.

HE SAID PROBLEMS AROSE BECAUSE MEMBERS USUALLY DID NOT KEEP THEIR MEMBERSHIP RECEIPTS AND SOME OF THEM HANDED THEIR RECEIPTS TO THE BRANCHES FOR SAFE KEEPING BUT EVEN THE RECORDS IN THE BRANCHES WERE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN.

THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP WOULD TAKE A LONG TIME, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID UMNO HEADQUARTERS WISHED TO REGAIN THE ASSETS SPEEDILY BECAUSE TOTAL DEBTS BEING BORNE WERE SUBSTANTIAL.

+FOR THIS BUILDING ALONE (PWTC), UMNO HAD TO PAY ABOUT \$30 MILLION ANNUALLY FOR INTEREST ON DEBTS,+ HE SAID.

WITH THIS PROBLEM, UMNO WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GET ANY PROFITS, EXCLUDING SOURCES OF FUNDS FROM ELSEWHERE, HE ADDED.

THE OPPOSITION WAS BEING SMART IN CLAIMING THAT UMNO BORROWED FROM JAPAN WHEN ACTUALLY ITS DEBTS WERE WITH BANK BUMIPUTERA WHICH GAVE THE LOAN, HE SAID. -- BERNAMA

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