

Mahathir-Mustapha ''

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 9 (Bernama) — Umno will appeal to the court should former Umno president Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun be expelled as Sabah Legislative Assembly member for Usukan after he joined Umno, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today. Tun Datu Mustapha need not resign as an elected representative as he has not breached any provisions of the law, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir who is Umno president.

He (Tun Datu Mustapha) contested not as an Umno candidate but on Misan Nasional's ticket. He is still in the BN. Therefore he has not left any political parties, he said at a press conference after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at party headquarters here.

The Sabah Constitution rules that a state legislative assembly seat becomes automatically vacant when the member concerned joins another party other than the one he represents in a general election.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said should the Assembly, scheduled to sit in April, decide to expel Tun Datu Mustapha, Umno would file an appeal in court on the interpretation of the law. — more

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Based on the interpretation of the law, Umno believed that Tun Datu Mustapha, presently Sabah Umno pro tem deputy liaison chairman, has not contravened any provisions of the law, said the Prime Minister.

If they (the State Legislative Assembly) want to expel they can but we will appeal in court... on the interpretation of the law as we think we have not breached the interpretation, he said.

Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) deputy president Datuk Bernard Dompok had recently said that the PBS would move a motion during the coming State Legislative Assembly sitting to decide on Tun Datu Mustapha's position.

On PBS' decision not to pursue further its proposal for a coalition with Umno in Sabah, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir who is BN chairman said:

It's up to them. Whether they are interested or not...we will not say anything. — More

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he had explained during the recent Rulers' Conference about an Umno General Assembly resolution on the position of the Rulers.

The explanation was well received, he said.

The Rulers have understood that Umno has no intention of abolishing the Constitutional Monarchy but was only defining its interpretation and the role of the monarchs in such a system.

When asked whether the issue has been settled, the Prime Minister said: As far as we know, that's all we wanted to do.

The Prime Minister said at today's meeting, the Supreme Council also discussed Umno's role in realising the plan to make Malaysia a fully developed country in 30 years from now.

He said it was vital that Umno ensure that the country remained politically stable so as to help the nation meet its economic objectives. —

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