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Umno-Candidates

185 ELIGIBLE TO CONTEST IN UMNO ELECTIONS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 23 (Bernama) -- A total of 185 candidates have been confirmed as eligible to contest in the Umno elections next month.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat, who announced this today, said the candidates were verified by the party election committee and declared to be "clean" of any political corruption, abuse of position or violation of the no-campaign ruling.

He said allegations and complaints against them were not supported by firm evidence.

"Although they have been declared eligible to contest, they are still bound by party rules and can be investigated should there be any complaint made against them after today," he told a news conference at party headquarters here.

Of the total number of candidates, seven are contesting for vice-president, 61 for seats in the Supreme Council, two for permanent chairman and three for deputy permanent chairman.

The Umno president and deputy president have been returned unopposed.

In the Umno Youth, five candidates will contest for the Youth head post, five for the vice-head post, 62 for Exco seats and two for deputy permanent chairman. Datuk Khalid Yunus has been returned unopposed as Youth permanent chairman.

In Wanita Umno, two candidates are vying for the post of Wanita Umno head, three for the position of vice-head, 30 for its Exco seats and three for the post of deputy permanent chairman. Tan Sri Aishah Ghani has been returned unopposed as Wanita permanent chairman.

Mohamed said the list of candidates was approved by the management committee chaired by party deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at its meeting last Wednesday and the list was confirmed by the party election committee on Thursday.

He said the Supreme Council special committee chaired by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had reminded that even though the official list had been agreed to by both committees, any candidate found to breach the rules laid down by party headquarters before the elections could still be disqualified.

The violations include contravening the no-campaign ruling, abusing their position and political corruption.

Mohamed said the management committee received more than 100 complaints about candidates breaching the rules but, upon investigation, it found them to be baseless.

On claims that several candidates had been declared bankrupt, he said after checking with the Official Assignee, it was found that the claims were untrue.

However, the Official Assignee informed Umno that 24 delegates to the party assembly were bankrupts but after they were contacted via letters, 16 replied that they were no longer so.

"Party headquarters considers the eight others who did not reply as still bankrupt and hence they are not eligible to attend the assembly and there will be no substitutes for them," he said.

He said of the 16 who replied, eight were confirmed to be no longer bankrupt while the cases of eight others were still being investigated as they claimed that they had taken steps to settle their debts and have their bankruptcy lifted.

The Official Assignee had confirmed 24 to be bankrupt despite some of them having settled their debts and had adequate proof to that effect and this only showed that the Official Assignee's office was still weak in updating its records, he said.

Mohamed said the Special Committee had decided that only delegates who had died could be substituted by those who received the most votes after the first 10 who were elected by the division.

-- BERNAMA

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