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Umno-Campaign

UMNO BANS ALL CAMPAIGNING ACTIVITIES

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council (MT) today decided to ban all campaigning for the October party elections whether directly or indirectly and warned that any member going against the directive would be expelled.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the MT had to ban campaigning because there were members who were capitalising on their position as delegates to the general assembly to extort something from candidates who wanted their votes.

"There are some members, in fact quite a number, who use their position as delegates to the general assembly to extort money, air tickets and many other things, otherwise they will not vote for the candidates concerned.

"MT has decided that if anyone is found to indulge in such things they would be expelled because we don't want such people to become Umno members," he told reporters after chairing the monthly MT meeting at the Umno headquarters here.

Dr Mahathir said the movement of every delegate, especially those who frequently came here or visited the other states to meet candidates, would be watched by the "Special Branch" appointed by the party headquarters to ensure that they did not defy the directive.

He said the MT had also decided that all party functions in conjunction with Umno's 50th anniversary celebrations would be postponed until the elections had been completed to avoid any campaigning for the October elections.

He said all Umno state conventions, the launching of Rukun Pemuda, the launching of the book on Wanita Umno and the Umno veteran awards would be postponed until after the general assembly.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Prime Minister, said all operations rooms set up by candidates must be closed down immediately.

"They don't need to have operations rooms and candidates also don't need to send letters, calling cards or any other forms of self identification," he added.

He also said candidates did not need to send congratulatory messages to members chosen as delegates to the general assembly.

"I, on behalf of the party headquarters, will send congratulatory messages to those who were successful," he said.

Asked whether the MT's directive would give an advantage to the incumbents, Dr Mahathir said the ban on campaigning was to ensure that only the clean ones would remain in Umno.

He said the delegates must choose candidates based on their performance and ability to lead.

"If someone is good and well known at the branch level, he is certain to be elected at the divisional level and thereafter at the state level and finally the federal level," he said.

As the English saying goes, "You cannot keep a good man down," he added.

"Even in the old days, Tengku Abdul Rahman did not campaign, Tun Abdul Razak and Tun Hussein Onn also did not campaign," he said.

"There are also people who looked clean before being elected but turned dirty after being elected," he added.

Asked whether the MT's decision was meant to maintain the status quo, Dr Mahathir smiled and replied: "We only want clean people in Umno."

Asked whether money politics and extortion by delegates were now at a critical stage, he said at the moment they were not widespread in Umno and there were only one or two cases.

"We need to curb the problem before it spreads," he said. -- BERNAMA
SJA AH AO