

03 JAN 1998

Ghapur-Umno

GHAPUR DENIES PROBLEMS WITH SABAH UMNO LEADERSHIP

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Abdul Ghapur Salleh, who withdrew his resignation from three important posts in the party and state government yesterday, clarified today that he did not have any problem with the state Umno leadership.

"I do not have problems with the Umno leadership at state level," he said in reply to reporters at the airport here before leaving for Tawau to explain his decision to his Merotai constituents.

He said he had withdrawn the resignation on the advice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who both wanted him to put personal problems aside and continue to serve.

On Dec 13, Ghapur announced his resignation as deputy chief minister, state finance minister and deputy chairman of the state Umno liaison committee, citing personal problems and his failure to carry out his duties as a member of the state cabinet.

Meanwhile, Sabah Umno liaison committee chairman Datuk Osu Sukam welcomed the withdrawal and said that Ghapur had made a responsible move.

"Ghapur's decision shows that he is a responsible leader who puts the interest of party before his," he said.

Osu, who is the Land and Cooperative Development Minister, said, however, that should Ghapur face problems in carrying out his duties in future, he should discuss with his colleagues in the cabinet or Umno leadership.

"This will not only enhance unity within the party but will also strengthen the Barisan Nasional in general," he said.

Meanwhile, opposition leader Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan, who is also Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) president, questioned the credibility of the state Barisan leaders whom he described as fickle.

He said Ghapur's case only proved that it was the federal government that decided everything for Sabah and added that the State Legislative Assembly must be immediately disbanded to allow the people to decide on a new mandate. -- BERNAMA

KG ATI JK