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Stiffer action against errant Umno members sought

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UMNO vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said he will recommend to the management and disciplinary committee to take tougher actions against Umno members who fight and create chaos during meetings.

Speaking after opening the Umno Subang branches' annual meeting in Petaling Jaya, Abdullah said fighting in Umno should not happen.

"If a member wants to contest, there is no need to fight. The fighting may be caused when there is too much campaigning.

"It is a shame to Umno. This is not the way we do politics. This is not the way we campaign. This is not the way we nominate. This is not good as it tarnishes the image of the party," he said.

Abdullah who is Foreign Minister also sits in the management and disciplinary committee which will commence this Tuesday.

There are currently three branches - Permatang Pasir Umno branch, Permatang Pasir Tengah Umno branch and Umno Jempol Division - which has postponed its annual meeting due to chaos.

"Like it or not, people look at Umno. Umno is observed by the entire Malaysian population regardless of race since we are the Government's party.

"People hope the Government's party is wise in choosing its leaders that are responsible and able to overcome problems for the good of the country.

"Therefore, we have to give confidence to the rakyat in our ways of establishing democracy in an orderly manner and according to the Constitution," Abdullah added.

An Umno member caught causing chaos can be suspended and prevented from running in the elections.

He added that in order for the rakyat not to be disappointed with the party, he advised party members to choose leaders who are responsible and not someone who is power crazy or uses "gangster tactics" to win the post.

"Umno does not want gangster leaders and if this happens, it will be very unfortunate for Umno," he said.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports from Kota Baru that 10 of 14 Umno divisions in Kelantan are unlikely to see contest for divisional chief posts in party elections next month, state Umno liaison deputy chief Datuk Annuar Musa said yesterday.

He said that following negotiations to avoid split in the party he did not foresee contest in Bachok, Peringat, Gua Musang, Kuala Krai, Machang, Tanah Merah, Pasir Mas, Tumpat, Pengkalan Chepa and Jeli divisions.

The no-contest arrangement was in line with Prime Minister and party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's advice against contest for divisional leadership in the state to preserve party unity. Dr Mahathir is also Kelantan Umno liaison chairman.

"So far only four divisions namely Kota Baru, Kubang Kerian, Rantau Panjang and Pasir Puteh remained problematic. Negotiations are ongoing to avert contest for the divisional leadership in these divisions," Annuar said.

Annuar, who is also Rural Development Minister, told reporters this after meeting mukim development chairmen and local Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders at the Umno headquarters in Kota Baru.

He said he had also asked candidates not accepting nominations to contest for divisional posts to give such undertaking but formally filling

up forms rejecting the nominations.

Annuar, who is also the Kelantan BN chairman, said the coalition will kick off a series of road-shows state-wide beginning April 1 to consolidate the BN election machinery and unity among component parties.

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