

06/07/1999

Abdul Malek, Pamiang still Assemblymen

KOTA KINABALU, Mon. - Kuamut Assemblyman Abdul Malek Chua and Pensiangan Assemblyman Ulin Pamiang, who resigned from Parti Bersatu Sabah to join Umno recently, remain members of the State Legislative Assembly.

Their status had been uncertain after the PBS submitted letters of resignation purportedly signed by them to Speaker Datuk Hassan Alban Sandukong.

Hassan said the two had informed him that they did not wish to resign as Assemblymen.

"I have decided that they remain members of the Assembly based on their written and verbal statements to me that they are not resigning," Hassan said.

The two had admitted signing several documents, including an undated resignation letter, prepared by the PBS in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths.

"But in my discussion with them, they have changed their mind and they wish to remain as Assemblymen," Hassan told reporters at his office.

Abdul Malek and Pamiang submitted their Umno membership application forms to president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on June 20.

The PBS submitted the letters on June 22 to Hassan together with a Power of Attorney authorising party president Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan to do so on behalf of Abdul Malek and Pamiang.

Abdul Malek, who was a PBS deputy president representing the Muslim Bumiputeras before joining Umno, met Hassan today while Pamiang had a similar meeting several days after he left the PBS.

Hassan also said Abdul Malek and Pamiang would continue to enjoy the privileges accorded to State Assemblymen.

The two will be seated with government backbenchers when the Assembly sits for two days from Aug 2.

Asked about PBS' decision to seek the court's interpretation of the documents, including the undated resignation letters signed by the two Assemblymen, Hassan said: "We will respond and act according to any ruling by the court."

He said it was only fair for Abdul Malek and Pamiang to remain as Assemblyman until the court made a ruling.

Meanwhile, Abdul Malek said in the interest of the people in Kuamut he was prepared to face the consequences of his decision to join Umno.

He said during the few months he was an opposition Assemblyman, he realised that the people in Kuamut were very much dependent on the Government for assistance and development.

"I realise that by doing this (leaving the PBS to join Umno) I will encounter a lot of personal risks but the risks are worth the cries of the people in Kuamut who are in dire need of development," he said.

In another case, Bingkor PBS division head and Assemblyman Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan claimed that the majority of the 2,004 who joined Parti Demokratik Sabah on Friday were from Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah. He said only a few were from PBS.

PBRS is a Barisan Nasional component party headed by former Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Kurup, who failed to unseat Jeffrey in the March 12-13 State election.

Kitingan claimed that PBRS and PDS were pinching members from each other.

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