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Umno-General Election (Roundup)

BEATING OF THE UMNO WAR DRUMS TO FACE THE ELECTION HAVE BEGUN

KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- The beat of the Umno war drums for the general election are becoming more audible when its Youth and Wanita wings demonstrated a strong spirit and readiness in facing the general election at their respective general assemblies today.

They expressed determination in closing ranks to counter the attacks from the oppositions which perceive the coming general election as their best chance to topple the Barisan Nasional (BN) government following the economic downturn and the events taking place in Umno.

State representatives who spoke during the debate on the speeches of the Wanita and Youth heads reflected their determination and readiness to answer all the allegations and slanderous remarks made by the opposition parties against the leaders in the wake of general election which Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had anticipated to be the dirtiest in Malaysian history.

In fact, Kelantan representative Khadijah Mohamad is confident that Umno is now strong enough to recapture the state from the opposition.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, when simultaneously opening the general assemblies of the two wings, started to beat the war drum when he called on Umno members to strive together to face the coming general election by exposing the manipulations of those groups who denied the role of Islam in Umno's struggles.

Reminding the delegates of the fact that Islam had been the main pillar in Umno's struggles all this while, Abdullah who is also performing the duties of the deputy president, urged Umno members to expose the ploys of the opposition parties in exploiting and manipulating the Islamic resurgence purely for their political interest.

"They come up with religious explanations to weaken the struggles of the Malays for the race," he said.

According to him, the opposition parties were equating the Malay nationalistic sentiments which had been the thrust in the Umno cause with the narrow "assabiyah" thinking.

Wanita Umno head Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman said the movement was ready to defend Umno continuity in the coming general election.

"The Wanita wing is not prepared to allow the political scenario in the country to be used as a battle ground by groups who are exploiting the situation and who intend to topple the government, or as the reason for changing the existing system," she said.

Umno Youth acting head Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein also expressed the commitment of the members of the Youth movement in facing all challenges to continue the Umno struggles.

"The Youth movement will continue with the Umno agenda to ensure continuity of the Malay struggles in enhancing the Islamic faith, to lift national integrity, to defend national values and culture, to strengthen the economy and the sovereignty of the institution of Malay Rulers," he said.

The statement by Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob after holding a meeting with secretaries of the state Umno Liaison Bodies today reflected Umno's fighting spirit and readiness in facing the general election.

According to him, the Umno election machinery throughout the country are now ready in terms of logistics and manpower to be fully mobilised to

face the general election.

Umno, he said, is just waiting for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to announce the general election to mobilise the party machinery at the state and divisional levels.

Umno had also improved its two-way feedback system between the party headquarters and the states to beef up its preparation, he said.

Khalil also said all branches and divisions were now ready with posters and the list of speakers in the field of religion, politics and economy.

-- BERNAMA

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