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Bersekutu members join Umno

Jaswinder Kaur

KOTA KINABALU, Fri. - Parti Barisan Rakyat Sabah Bersekutu (Bersekutu) headed by former Chief Minister Datuk Harris Salleh today received a severe blow when its Sekong division head Matajang Puyun and some 5,800 members defected to Umno.

They handed their application forms to join Umno to Sabah Umno head Datuk Osu Sukam this afternoon.

Also present were State Umno Information chief Datuk Karim Ghani, State Umno Wanita head Datuk Norjan Khan Bahadar, State Umno Youth head Jema Khan, State Umno secretary Datuk Yahya Hussin and Libaran Umno head Datuk Musa Aman.

Matajang said the 5,800 were leaders and members from 120 Bersekutu branches in Sekong.

"We decided to join Umno as we are confident in the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi."

Matajang said Bersekutu was not capable of ruling the State as it could not settle its internal squabbles.

Speaking at a Press conference after welcoming the ex-Bersekutu leaders and members into Umno, Osu said: "The entry of former Bersekutu leaders and members to Umno shows that the people are aware that parties which are not under BN could not bring good for the people and the State.

"This is just the beginning. I am confident that more opposition members will join Umno and other BN component parties in the future."

Osu said he understood that some 1,300 members of opposition parties were expected to join Umno in Klias, Kuala Penyu, Bengkoka, Kawang, Melalap, Tempasuk, Lahad Datu, Ranau, Banggi, Petagas and Kundasang, in the near future.

"We have directed Umno divisions in these areas to receive applications from new members. We want them to join Umno sincerely and we want to make it clear that they are not pressed to join the party."

He also said racial politics which was the norm in Sabah in the past, was not good for the State and the people.

"I am confident that the people will no longer vote based on race differences but vote for the BN which they know is the right choice for the future of Sabah," he said.

In welcoming the members, Osu said they should understand their responsibilities to Umno.

"It is all right if we have few members who understand their responsibilities. It is useless if we have many members who do not understand their responsibilities to the party," he said.

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