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Khalil explains sacking of nine Umno members

SUNGEI BESI, Tues. - Umno sacked Datuk Kamaruddin Jaafar along with eight others because the party has information that they were undermining the party, Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob said today.

Kamaruddin, a close associate of former deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, had been the Tumpat divisional head.

Khalil said the expulsion of Kamaruddin and the eight was based on valid reasons and due to very glaring offences.

"They were aiding the opposition in their attempt to destroy the party (Umno)," Khalil said.

He said the party's disciplinary committee would study cases individually, and those with glaring offences would have to go.

The Umno secretary-general was asked why Kamaruddin was sacked while Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who had apologised to party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was not.

"We have to study the offence. We received information that they (the nine) were working to bring down the party.

"What we understand is that Zahid has apologised to the party president and I believe the Umno leadership has accepted the apology," said Khalil, who is Information Minister, at the appointment of Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM) as the host broadcaster for the World Cup Golf Championship.

The Umno supreme council last night expelled the nine members. Apart from Kamaruddin, the others are four members from the Bukit Gantang division in Perak, namely Ismail Yusof, Said Othman, Tarmizi Ismail and Jumri Sabran; Senator Hamzah Mohd Zain from the Chenderoh division, Perak; Abdul Wahab Abdullah from the Johor Baru division; and two members from the Tumpat division, Saufi Daud (secretary) and Mohamad Noor.

He added that Umno would explain to members at state and division levels as to the reasons for the latest expulsions.

Khalil said that Umno remained intact despite the expulsion. For instance, the council meeting approved the setting up of 11 new branches, he added.

These are one each in Terengganu, Penang and Perak, four in Negri Sembilan, two in Johor and two in Sabah.

"If the offence is very serious, then the punishment should be severe, like dismissal," said Khalil.

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