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Pairin-Action

PBS CONTEMPLATES LEGAL ACTION AGAINST DEFECTORS

KOTA KINABALU, June 21 (Bernama) -- Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) president Datuk Joseph Pairin Kitingan said today the party was studying the form of legal action that can be taken against its two assemblymen for defecting to Umno.

He said the move followed the signing of documents by the party's candidates fielded in the March state election, which among others, agreed to vacate their seats if they hopped to another party.

" We have discussed the matter and will take the necessary measures to enforce the contents of the documents signed by them," he said when commenting on the move by assemblymen Abdul Malek Chua (Kuamut) and Ulin Pamiang (Pensiangan) to embrace Umno yesterday.

Malek, a former deputy president of PBS and Ulin submitted their membership forms to Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the sidelines of the party's 53rd General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur.

Pairin claimed Malek and Ulin were persuaded in various ways by certain people to cross-over to Barisan Nasional (BN).

Asked what is the need for the two assemblymen to join Umno as the BN had a comfortable majority in the state legislature, he said, it could be part of efforts to end the rotation system of the chief minister's post.

"I myself is sceptical about the whole thing. So, I can only surmise that this is the way for Umno to try and stop the rotation system...they look for people to join Umno to increase their number (in the assembly) and say that they have the majority, so there is no need for the rotation system," he said.

The ruling BN now has 33 seats in the 48-seat legislature with the defection of Malek and Ulin. Umno had also increased its representation to 26 from 24 previously.

Pairin said the two should vacate their seats to pave the way for a by-election.

He also said the latest developments in PBS would not derail its preparations for the upcoming general election as the party's fate would be determined by the people.

On talk that Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) would form a pact with opposition parties in Sabah to face the general election, Pairin said the newly-formed party should focus its attention in Peninsular Malaysia which had more parliamentary seats as compared to only 20 in Sabah.

He, however, said it would be better if opposition parties formed an alliance to prevent a vote split.

" As far as possible, we hope Keadilan will concentrate in the peninsula and let us focus in Sabah," he added.

PBS' eight parliamentary seats had been reduced to six with the defection of Marudu MP Datuk Amir Kahar Tun Mustapha to Umno and the recent cross-over of Penampang MP Paul Nointien to Parti Demokratik Sabah (PDS), a BN component.

-- BERNAMA

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