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Divisional leaders' reaction to Tanah Merah's nomination

KOTA BARU, Mon. - State Umno divisional leaders have reacted in mixed fashion to the move by the Tanah Merah division on Friday to nominate Kelantan Umno chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for the top two party posts. Pengkalan Chepa Umno division chief Datuk Ariffin Abdul Hamid said Tanah Merah should have nominated Tengku Razaleigh only for one of the posts. "The move to nominate for both posts was an emotional one," he said. "Whether Tengku Razaleigh is qualified or Tanah Merah has ignored the supreme council's advice (that there should be no contest for the top two posts) is not the question, but it is inappropriate to nominate him for both posts," he said.

Ariffin said Umno now needed to be strengthened by maintaining the existing leadership.

"Tanah Merah has given the impression that there is no avenue to correct the party from within," he said.

Kota Baru Umno division chief Datuk Ahmad Rastom Ahmad Maher said the party now needed unity the most.

"We want to see contribution from Tengku Razaleigh as a leader as much as we are against any split in the party.

"We want to see everybody has a role (in party's leadership)."

He said they wanted Tengku Razaleigh as well as party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and vice president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Ahmad Rastom also called on the Umno leadership to sit together and decide what was best and make this clear to party members.

Tumpat Umno division chief Mansor Salleh said the right of Tanah Merah division to nominate Tengku Razaleigh should not be questioned.

"This does not mean all delegates prefer Tengku Razaleigh as the nomination was concluded after the delegates went through voting process.

"There were Umno members in Tanah Merah who voted for the proposal to nominate Dr Mahathir and Abdullah also, but their number was smaller."

Mansor also said his division would respect the delegates' choice of the party's leadership.

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