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`Umno can't afford to have factions'

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Umno is better off without factions, supreme council member and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

He said factions only created discord.

"I hope there will not be a repeat of what happened at Umno's general assembly in 1993 and 1996," Syed Hamid added.

In both years, candidates aligned to one faction swept almost all the posts contested.

"I believe camps and factions will destroy Umno. When we take part in party elections, it is a contest among friends.

"There is no need for factions or camps which will only lead to discord and rift," he said at a Hari Raya gathering at Wisma Putra.

Syed Hamid was asked about the lack of major factions in the run-up to the party elections in May.

On the supreme council's no-contest advice for the two top posts, Syed Hamid said it was not an order and, therefore, the divisions could nominate candidates.

"If there are no candidates for the top two posts, the incumbents win. However, nominations for the positions cannot be rejected.

"But, we hope the divisions will nominate those whom the supreme council had endorsed, namely Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi," he added.

For other positions, Syed Hamid, who has indicated an interest to contest the vice-presidency, said it was up to the divisions to nominate those they felt were credible.

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