

'Malays need Umno to protect their rights'

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PENANG, Sun. — Umno Information chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said today that continued division among the Malays could result in the Opposition taking over and forming a "Malaysian-Malaysia" Government.

"If this happens, they will destroy the Malays by adopting meritocracy policies such as those practised in Singapore."

This, he added, was already evident in the manner in which the Opposition which was in favour of the 83-point memorandum (which included questioning Malay privileges) raised by the Chinese Associations Election Appeals Committee (Suqiu).

Pas and Keadilan, Mustapa added, did not respect the rights of the Malays, as seen from its alliance with the DAP (which in turn had supported Suqiu).

"The Malays must realise that without Umno, Malaysia will not be anything like it is today for the Malays ... they will be on the losing end and be marginalised like the Singapore Malays."

Mustapa pointed out that Umno was not against meritocracy as seen from Barisan Nasional's power-sharing concept, but was

merely safeguarding the interests and rights of the Malays.

He said this when opening Umno Tanjung's delegates conference at the City Bayview Hotel in Georgetown.

Present were 186 delegates from 28 branches, along with the division's chief Datuk Ahmad Ibni Hajar and Umno supreme council member Datuk Seri Mohd Shariff Omar.

Concurring with Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the party was facing a "hostile environment" through lies, deception and other tactics employed by the party's "enemies", Mustapa said:

"Many of our members have been hood-winked by the Opposition, as seen in the 1999 general election when many seats fell to the Opposition.

"We need to win over these members, especially those in the party's Youth and Puteri wings, so that new blood can also be infused."

Stating that 17 months had already passed since the general election and that a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis

needed to be carried out, Mustapa outlined various strategies which could be adopted by Umno, in ensuring continued support from the Malays.

"First, party leaders need to return to basics and restore the level of confidence among members, by embracing the same commitment displayed by our founding fathers like the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, Datuk Onn Jaafar and Tun Abdul Razak."

One flaw he noted among members, was in-party division caused by candidates who were not chosen during the party elections.

"Leaders must ensure that explanations are given to members at all levels so that any rifts can be mended swiftly."

Another strategy being employed by Umno in ensuring party messages were disseminated to all members, would be the distribution of speeches by Umno leaders.

"We will tape messages by leaders like the Prime Minister and Islamic leaders at *ceramah* and public functions. These messages will be distributed for use nationwide by Umno divisions."