

PM has our students' support, says UUM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Universiti Utara Malaysia, which last month deferred signing a declaration of support for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has submitted a referendum to the Prime Minister which offered the backing of 16,850 students for his leadership.

Newly-elected UUM student representative council president Shamshuhardi Basir said the referendum also stated that

the students were privileged to be given seats at the university.

The referendum was submitted to Dr Mahathir in Kedah on Dec 13, he said, adding that he took the opportunity to explain to the Prime Minister why the UUM did not sign the declaration earlier with 16 other public universities.

Clarifying the university's stand, Shamshuhardi said UUM did not sign then as it had yet to

consult the student body about the declaration.

"I did not want to send a different signal to Dr Mahathir. I wanted the students to be consulted first and be fully aware of the contents of the declaration," he said.

Last month, UUM was caught in a controversy when it did not sign the declaration while all the other universities did so during a *buka puasa*

function the Prime Minister hosted.

The university issued a statement after the event to say it would not be forced to sign the declaration when UUM has yet to appoint office bearers to its students' council.

Shamshuhardi said when a referendum was made, most of the students agreed to the contents which, among other things, gave their support to the

government's aspirations and their promise not to take part in any activity that could be deemed "anti-government."

UUM is said to be a "hotbed" of opposition supporters.

Two years ago, several UUM students were suspended for helping the opposition in the Arau by-election in Perlis where PAS wrested control of the constituency from Barisan Nasional.