

Dr M: Don't publicise problems in Umno

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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno members have been ordered to keep their in-fighting within the party and not air their grievances and internal problems in public.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said they should instead, forward their grouses to any supreme council member so that the issues could be brought to the party's attention.

Alternatively, members could write to the party headquarters so that their com-

plaints could be discussed at the earliest supreme council meeting, the Prime Minister said.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing the council meeting here yesterday.

Asked if this directive was tantamount to a gag order, Dr Mahathir said:

"This is not a gag order, but if they have problems . . . if they feel that things are not right with the party, they should use the proper channels.

"They can also tell the media . . . but this will only help the opposition."

On whether the directive was prompted by criticisms against the party leadership at the recent Malay Action Front solidarity gathering, he said: "This is a general directive."

"They (some of the rally speakers) are in Umno. So, they must observe its discipline," he added.

Dr Mahathir announced the setting up of a national-level pro tem committee for Puteri Umno, the new youth entity for women.

He said their first task would be to oversee the setting up of similar committees in each state.

The members of the pro tem committee, however, have not been selected.

Dr Mahathir said the age limit for Puteri members had been set at 35 years.

Wanita Umno had recommended that the age limit be set at 30, and this was also applicable to its leader.

Under the recommendation, Wanita members would be given the option to join the new wing or remain with Wanita Umno.

The formation of Puteri Umno was intended to attract more younger women to join the party.