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Appointments valid, says Syed Razak

ALOR STAR, Wed. - Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain said the appointments made by Umno Baling division chief Datuk Raja Ariffin Raja Sulaiman on Monday night was valid.

He said this was because Raja Ariffin had received his official appointment letter as the division chief and was therefore allowed to make the appointments.

Syed Razak urged all members in the division to accept Raja Ariffin.

He said this in response to questions on the validity of the division's first meeting and appointments made by Raja Ariffin.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing the State Exco meeting here.

At the first division meeting held on Monday night, Raja Ariffin appointed Burhan Amir as the division secretary.

He also appointed Razali Hanafiah as the treasurer and Abdul Wahab Din as the information chief.

Several members of the division had questioned these appointments following the absence of nine committee members at the first meeting.

Meanwhile, former division chief Datuk Zainol Md Isa said he did not think he was the reason some division members were opposing Raja Ariffin.

"I myself do not know anything about their actions as I just returned from an overseas holiday yesterday.

"In my personal opinion, maybe they did those things because their Umno spirit is too strong," he said in response to the Menteri Besar's statement.

In a written statement today, Zainol said it had never crossed his mind that some members, unhappy with his removal as division chief, could have taken such actions.

However, he appealed to the division members to remain united.

On April 28, Zainol defeated Raja Ariffin with a majority of 107 votes in the Baling divisional elections.

Zainol was removed from his post after he was found guilty of indulging in money politics by the Umno disciplinary board.

Zainol's appeal against the decision was rejected and the supreme council appointed Raja Ariffin as the new division chief.

Following Raja Ariffin's appointment, several branch chiefs expressed their dissatisfaction of the choice by sending a letter of protest to party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

They claimed that the appointment of Raja Ariffin was not in line with the party constitution.

In his statement today, Zainol said he was willing to help strengthen party unity.

"Even before this, I had asked my supporters and those who sympathise with me to be calm and accept the supreme council's decision," he said.

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