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Eye-opener for ex-Akar members

IT WAS a learning experience for six former top Chinese leaders of the disbanded Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat invited as special observers to the Umno general assembly.

The five were among 5,000 Chinese Akar leaders and members who opted to join Umno after the dissolution of Akar last month.

"This is the first time I am attending an Umno assembly, but I feel very much at home," former Akar supreme council member Lu Chu Kong said, adding that he felt very much a part of Umno.

Former Akar deputy president Datuk Filino Hee said although the deliberations at the assembly centred on issues affecting the Malays, they were also relevant to all Malaysians, including the Chinese.

"We will explain to all the former Akar Chinese members who have joined Umno that there was no need for them to feel isolated in Umno," said Hee, a founding member of Akar.

The other former Chinese leaders of Akar invited to the assembly were treasurer-general William Chang, Wanita chief Tee Geok Moi and supreme council members Chew Min Hee and Martin Yong.

Former Akar secretary-general Ricky Sedomon said the Umno headquarters invited 23 former leaders of Akar, including its former president Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia, as special observers to the assembly.

He said they now had a better understanding of Umno's struggle and direction after hearing the opening speech of Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We also find the debates on the various motions very interesting and educational," added Sedomon, a Murut from Sabah's interior district of Keningau.

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