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Unity-Malay

POSITIVE SIGNS TO PROPOSED MALAY UNITY TALK BETWEEN UMNO AND PAS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 8 (Bernama) -- There are positive signs that the proposed Malay Unity talk between Umno and PAS will materialise after all.

Umno secretary general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and PAS counterpart Haji Nasharudin Mat Isa were all smiles as they emerged from their meeting -- lasting about two and half hours -- at a hotel here today.

The meeting was to discuss the format for the proposed talk.

Speaking to reporters who had been waiting for the outcome of the meeting since noon, Khalil said both sides would report to their respective parties on what were discussed and proposed at the meeting for consideration and approval.

"The discussion was to make recommendation, leading to a decision by the PAS supreme committee and also Umno political bureau, that's all," he said.

He said the meeting was held in the spirit of goodwill and had presented several matters to serve as the basic proposal for the meeting of the leaders of both parties.

To a question on the possibility of the leaders of both parties meeting after this, Khalil asked the media to wait for further developments after both of them had briefed their respective leaders.

Meanwhile, Nasharudin described his meeting with Khalil as positive.

"Good, satisfied, like he said just now we can walk together," he told reporters.

Both, however, refused to go into the details on matters discussed in the meeting.

Khalil was accompanied by the Political Secretary to the Prime Minister Datuk Dusuki Ahmad, Umno Executive Secretary Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor and Umno Headquarters Administrative Manager Abu Khamis to the meeting.

Nasharuddin, meanwhile, was accompanied by PAS national executive committee member Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli, Pahang PAS liaison secretary Dr Abdul Wahab Ismail and Harakah Managing Director Datuk Hishamuddin Yahya.

Khalil, pressed further by reporters for details, said: "We discussed the question of unity."

He said both sides would hold a brief meeting once they had briefed their respective leaders.

The proposal that Umno and PAS should sit down together to restore unity among the Malays who have started to divide due to different political beliefs was raised in December last year.

Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and PAS President Datuk Fadzil Noor had early last month openly supported the proposed talk.

The Umno Supreme Council on Jan 12 also agreed to the proposed Malay Unity talk and directed Khalil to contact and make arrangements with his PAS counterpart, Nasharudin.

PAS' willingness to sit down together with Umno to discuss Malay unity is the first after more than 20 years since PAS left the Barisan Nasional (BN).

--BERNAMA

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