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Khalil-Umno

UMNO HAS NO ULTERIOR MOTIVES IN MALAY UNITY TALKS, SAYS KHALIL

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 28 (Bernama) -- Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob today denied claims by Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) that Umno has ulterior motives in initiating Malay unity talks.

"We are serious in this matter...there are no hidden agendas whatsoever," he told reporters at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport here before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

He was asked to comment on the statement by Keadilan Youth chief Ezam Mohd Nor in Kuala Terengganu yesterday that Umno might have ulterior motives in its move to hold Malay unity talks with Malay-based opposition parties.

Ezam had said Keadilan was willing to reconsider its decision to reject Umno's invitation to participate in the talks provided the scope of discussions is expanded to national unity.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had recently invited leaders of PAS and Keadilan to discuss the Malay unity issue.

Keadilan supreme council, however, snubbed the offer while PAS agreed.

Khalil, who is Information Minister, said the delay for the talks was not deliberate as PAS secretary-general Nasharuddin Mat Isa was overseas.

"As soon as he returns to the country, we'll hold the talks.

"In this context, Umno is open...we'll start off the talks with the Malay unity agenda," he said.

Khalil said although Nasharuddin was overseas, he had discussed matters pertaining to the talks with PAS executive-secretary.

"As the Umno secretary-general entrusted with the task of arranging for the talks, I've contacted PAS executive secretary several times, the latest being last Saturday," he said.

This showed Umno was serious in uniting the Malays in the country, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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