

14 SEP 2002

Khalil-Puteri

REFER GROUSES TO UMNO MANAGEMENT PANEL, PUTERI UMNO MEMBERS TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said today Raihan Sulaiman can refer to the party's management committee problems arising from her intention to contest for the Puteri Umno chief's post on Nov 2.

This include getting clarifications on her eligibility to contest in accordance with party regulations, he said.

"I don't want to make any assumption. If she wants to contest and feels she need to get clarification (on her status), she can write in to us," he told reporters at Umno headquarters in Putra World Trade Centre.

Raihan was reported recently to have disputed the actions by certain quarters who questioned her membership in Puteri Umno. She is also said to be a Wanita Umno executive committee member of the Kulim Bandar Baharu Umno division in Kedah.

Asked on the police report lodged by a Puteri Umno member Zalilah Yusof on alleged misappropriation of assets belonging to the movement, Khalil said any grouses within Umno, it would be better to refer them to the management committee for further action.

Saying that lodging a police report was an individual's right, Khalil, who is also Information Minister, asked Puteri Umno members to show sense of belonging to the 93,106-member movement.

Touching on the impending Gaya parliamentary by-election in Sabah, he said it was up to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his capacity as Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman to decide which component party's candidate would contest in the seat.

"Going by the previous candidate, it was from SAPP (Sabah Progressive Party). But we assume that since it is a SAPP seat, perhaps SAPP will contest again," he said.

The by-election would be held as the Election Commission had confirmed that former Sabah chief minister and SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee had been disqualified as the Gaya MP.

Khalil said Umno would assist the Sabah BN election machinery to face the by-election.

He also said the Umno supreme council would hold a special meeting on Sept 30.

In the meeting, Dr Mahathir would, among other things, disclose to the council his intention not to seek re-election at the next general election scheduled for 2004 as he announced in Alor Setar yesterday.

Meanwhile, Raihan hoped the confusion over her eligibility to vie for the Puteri Umno's top post could be cleared soon.

"I don't want my status to be kept in vague. I want this matter to be clarified to avoid problems after nomination has been filed," she told reporters at her house today.

Raihan said she would hand a letter on Monday to Khalil seeking clarification on her eligibility.

"I don't mind if I'm not qualified to contest if I'm not really eligible as long as the matter can be clarified and does not create confusion.

Raihan said she decided to go for the Puteri Umno's top post in accordance with the rules and regulations laid down by Umno.

"I made the decision based on the existing party rules. I need to be pointed out fairly if I had made a mistake," she said.

She asked why her intention to vie for the post was being questioned whilst her position in Umno was the same with that of Puteri Umno pro tem head Azalina Othman Said.

Raihan, the daughter of Sulaiman Palestine, who contested and lost to former prime minister Tun Hussein Onn for the Umno presidency, said she wants to know on which platform she could contest whether as a Puteri Umno member, Wanita Umno or as an ordinary party member.

"On Oct 4, 2001, I turned 35, thus losing my eligibility as a Puteri Umno member, and automatically I'm now a Wanita Umno member, similarly with Azalina. As such, which ticket I should use?" she asked.

The age limit for Puteri Umno chief's post is 40 while the movement's members must be aged between 18 and 35.

-- BERNAMA

MUN SHI AZZ TS