

PBDS reps not invited to meeting

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Representatives of Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak (PBDS), which is embroiled in a leadership tussle, were not invited to attend the Barisan Nasional management committee meeting today.

BN deputy chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who chaired today's meeting, said the PBDS crisis was also not discussed.

"We did not touch on the PBDS crisis during today's meeting. We'll leave it to the BN supreme council to decide at its next meeting.

"It is up to the BN chairman (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) to decide whether or not to invite PBDS to the supreme council meeting," said Abdullah, who is also Umno deputy president and Deputy Prime Minister, after chairing the BN management meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre.

After the meeting, BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat said PBDS representatives would be invited to BN functions only after they had resolved the leadership issue.

"They have to settle the problem and the Registrar of Societies must decide who is the rightful president. Then only we will invite them. We do not want to be seen as taking sides if we invite any of the two teams in PBDS to our functions," said Mohamed.

On what would happen if the leadership crisis was not resolved before the next general election, Mohamed said: "Do not speculate. Let's wait for them to solve the problem. Technically, PBDS is still a BN component party."

The leadership tussle in PBDS started after the resignation of its president Datuk Amar Leo Moggie on June 25. Datuk Seri Dr Daniel Tajem, who had been the deputy president since its formation in 1983, took over and was subsequently

elected president at its triennial delegates conference on July 26 and 27.

However, the faction aligned to former party information chief, Datuk Seri Dr James Masing, elected him as president at their own triennial delegates conference on July 24.

On another issue, when asked whether BN would include in its constitution that a by-election must be held if a component party member hopped from one party to another, Abdullah said: "We discussed about party hopping at our last supreme council meeting in January.

"There is no need to raise the matter again. We have agreed on this and we have a consensus on the action to be taken when such a situation arises."

On Saturday, Mohamed said that a BN party might be expelled if it accepted an elected representative of another component partner as a member.

He said the no-crossover ruling was made at the BN supreme council meeting in January.