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Mahathir-Umno

NO FACTIONS IN UMNO, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 22 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today clarified that there are now no factions in the party although this had happened before and had weakened the party.

Dr Mahathir said that when touching on problems faced by Umno he had merely stated that there were "disgruntled Umno people", either because they were not picked for certain posts or did not agree with some decisions of the party.

"I think the media did not understand what I was talking about. I did not say there were many factions in Umno. I only mentioned that there were factions in Umno previously and this weakened Umno," he told a news conference after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting here.

Dr Mahathir said the actions of this group of "people who were sulking or frustrated" could sometimes be detrimental to Umno.

"Some were sulking, some tried to ensure that the candidates picked were defeated and the like ... that is why I asked all parties to return to the old spirit of the struggle," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is the prime minister, was clarifying what he said at a press conference after Umno's 57th anniversary celebrations on May 11.

Following that, several Umno leaders also commented on the issue, with some suggesting measures to prevent a split in the party.

Dr Mahathir said having factions meant that some members would leave the party, like what happened sometime ago when Umno ulamaks joined PAS.

"There are no factions; faction means they left the party ... but if they are still in Umno and are only not too happy with certain things, that is not faction," he said.

On preparations for the general election, Dr Mahathir said Umno members at all levels, including Youth, Wanita and Puteri, had been asked to be prepared and to conduct trial runs for the next polls.

"This does not mean that election will be held soon, but normally Umno makes early preparations and now we have only a little more than a year before our term ends. So we have to make preparations," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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