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Kitingan leaves it to Umno to clarify membership status

KOTA KINABALU, Tues. - Bingkor Assemblyman Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan, whose "acceptance" into Umno is being questioned, is leaving it to the Umno leadership to clarify his position in the party.

He said he was surprised with Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman's clarification in the House on Monday that there was confusion about his membership in Umno.

"I am at the receiving end. It is not for me to decide ...the onus is on Umno to clarify where I stand in the party," he said before the start of the Assembly session today.

He showed reporters a photostat copy of his Umno membership certificate signed by Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob with the name "Gapari bin Kitingan" on it. The membership certificate, dated May 20, 2003, stated that Kitingan's application was approved by the Umno supreme council at its meeting on Feb 20, 2003.

He applied for membership through the Kampung Pauh Tulid branch in the Keningau division, and used the Bingkor Assemblyman's office address.

He said "Gapari bin Kitingan" was his name in his identity card, and that "Jeffrey" was his alias.

He also said that he had sent two applications to join Umno through the Kampung Pauh Tulid branch.

He passed one application to Kinabalu Umno division head Tan Sri Kasitah Gaddam, who is also Minister of Land and Co-operative Development, and another to Tenom division head Datuk Rizalman Abdullah.

"I do not know what the hoo-ha is about. If this matter is not settled, let me decide where I want to sit. I am just working for the people," said the former Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah deputy president.

He was expelled from PBRS last year and had been without a party until his "acceptance" into Umno.

He said he had written to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Musa, Khalil and and Assembly Speaker Datuk Juhar Mahiruddin about his "acceptance" into Umno.

Musa had on Monday told the House that Kitingan had been accepted as an Umno member, when Herbert Timbun Lagadan (PBS-Kedamaian) asked for clarification on Kitingan's position as he did not belong to any party.

He, however, later clarified that his confirmation that Kitingan had been accepted into Umno was based on information he had received from Speaker Datuk Juhar Mahiruddin.

He said that he had since been told by Khalil (Umno secretary-general) that there was a mistake over the matter and that he (Khalil) would inform him soon, in writing, about the status of Kitingan.