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Umno leaders hail Dr M's statement hitting out at those causing disunity

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Umno leaders today welcomed the Prime Minister's statement that dissatisfied members are causing disunity because they cannot get what they want from Umno or the Government.

Party vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks were timely considering that Umno was now 57 years old and the next general election was around the corner.

He said despite the achievements and successes of Umno over the years, Dr Mahathir's statement was necessary to remind members not to forget the original struggle of Umno and what the party stands for.

"Umno has never been about fighting for self-interests and attaining high positions.

"We have always been fighting for the broader interests of the nation."

He said members should not view Dr Mahathir's statement negatively, but consider it a timely reminder since some members tend to forget about the original struggle.

Dr Mahathir had yesterday described these dissatisfied members as splinter groups and a disappointed lot who criticised division heads and supreme council members because they were not selected as candidates in general elections or not given government posts.

"They are dissatisfied. They forget that the struggle is not over and that we have to face greater challenges in future," he told a Press conference after joining about 40,000 party leaders, members and supporters to celebrate Umno's 57th anniversary at Stadium Merdeka last night.

Another Umno vice-president, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, said any negative feelings among members should be thrashed out and all members must not forget the greater picture of what Umno stands for.

He said though Dr Mahathir's statement may not have been directed at anyone in particular, it should be taken as a positive reminder.

"After 57 years, we sometimes do get certain members or groups joining the party with vested interests.

These are the ones who tarnish the party's image and are not good for the party.

"What is important now is for each and every member to have the same spirit which members had when Umno was first formed 57 years ago," he added.

Puteri Umno head Azalina Othman Said said the movement welcomed the Prime Minister's statement and urged these splinter groups to close ranks and work harder rather than cause disunity and discredit the party.

"If certain members are really angry or dissatisfied, they should try working harder rather than sitting around and spreading baseless lies and rumours about the party.

"Even Puteri Umno is sometimes not spared these lies and rumours," she added.

Umno Youth executive council member Datuk Subahan Kamal said these dissatisfied and disgruntled groups would sooner or later be cast aside because such people cannot hope to survive long in a party like Umno.