

DAP seeks motion to bar Umno from Sarawak

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Sarawak DAP has called for a motion to be tabled in the legislative assembly to prevent the possibility of Umno parachuting into the state to stay for the long term.

Explaining the rationale, state party chairperson Chong Chieng Jen (left) said Umno's brand of '3R' politics - race, religion and royalty - has no place in Sarawak.

If Sarawak BN is serious about keeping Umno out of the state, he said, this is the most opportune time to table a motion.

"A special sitting can even be convened to have such a motion tabled and passed for the benefit of all Sarawakians," said Chong, who is Kota Sentosa assemblyperson.

He was commenting on an assertion by outgoing Chief Minister Abdul Taib Mahmud that he wants to "keep Sarawak for Sarawakians".

"At least, it is now openly admitted by Sarawak BN leaders that Umno is not welcome and Umno leaders (vice-presidents Shafie Apdal and Ahmad Zahid Hamidi) have openly stated that the party will not encroach into Sarawak politics," said Chong.

"However, comments in the media have no force of law. For example, even the cabinet's so-called 10-point solution in respect of the 'Allah' issue has not been adhered to by some government departments.

"Although my earlier motion in the state assembly to reject Umno was not accepted by the BN members during the previous sitting, the DAP will put aside partisan politics and support any motion tabled by the BN to reject Umno in Sarawak."

Several attempts had previously been made to introduce Umno into Sarawak by those who did not like Taib's style of administration and his alleged failure to look after bumiputera interests. But these attempts failed.

Oddly, the idea had initially been mooted by Taib's uncle Abdul Rahman Yakub (seated in photo) at the height of their quarrel and during the 'Ming Court affair' in 1987. It died down as soon as it was suggested.

Several years later, the idea resurfaced when Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha, a former minister in the Prime Minister's Department, claimed that he had been encouraged to set up an Umno branch in Sarawak by then premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Several former PBB leaders - including Abang Ahmad Urai and Bujang Ulis - endorsed the idea.

An Umno office was set up at Batu Lima, Matang. Although it remains in existence, it has failed to influence voters.

In 2008, when Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was premier, several ex-PBB leaders and members claimed that they had his support to recruit members in order to set up a branch.

They claimed that "several thousand" Sarawakians had been recruited. But the momentum died when Najib Abdul Razak took over as prime minister in April 2009.

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