

**Umno leaders want to be kings, laments Zam**  
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Former information minister Zainuddin Maidin said he was shocked to read a column in Utusan Malaysia praising Umno leaders dressed as Malay warriors during the party's Cheras division anniversary celebration.

Clad in expensive "kain songket" from head to toe, the daily's columnist claimed that it was the attire of warriors and Malay dignitaries of the past.

However, Zainuddin, who is popularly known as Zam, said he was tickled by the photograph that was published in the newspaper yesterday.

"I wonder if the Malay warriors of the past, who were poor, had donned expensive songket or if this showcased ordinary Malays becoming feudalistic through wealth," he said in his blog today.

"What is certain is that Umno leaders are not in touch with reality nor do they appreciate the inspiration of the new generation where most lead simple lives even among the professionals, except for a handful - the children of the new rich Malays who accumulated their wealth through politics or the bureaucracy," he added.

Zainuddin, the former editor-in-chief of Utusan Malaysia, pointed out that the price of songket worn by Malay dignitaries and Umno leaders today ranged from between RM5,000 and RM30,000.

By adorning such garments, he said Umno gave the impression that it continues to misunderstand the feelings of the grassroots.

"The leaders speak about living moderately but not only do the members not understand this, the leaders themselves are like parrots (that repeat the statement)," he added.

Zainuddin reminded Umno politicians that perception is more important and easily propagated than facts and figures.

"(Opposition leader) Anwar Ibrahim constructed the perception that he is a champion of Islam even when he has committed a great sin.

"PAS has developed its religious image to the point that the party is considered as the gateway to heaven," he added.

Expressing concern for Umno's future, he said what had unraveled in Cheras Umno gave

the impression that Umno leaders want to be kings and not ordinary citizens.

Utusan had dedicated an entire page to photographs from the event, on the occasion of the division's 20th anniversary, which was attended by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and his wife Rosmah Mansor.

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