

'Sack president' - Did Umno members cheer?

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The video recording of Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's speech at a closed-door Umno event has been making waves, primarily because he wanted the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) directors axed and investigated.

However, there is a second issue concerning claims that a sizeable number of the 400 Umno members present at the Janda Baik function cheered when a call rang out for party president Najib Abdul Razak to be sacked.

Malaysiakini checked with three Umno division leaders who attended the event but only one confirmed that it happened while another was unsure.

"The crowd was getting excited when Muhyiddin called for 1MDB's board to be axed and probed," said one of them on condition of anonymity.

It was at this juncture that the division leader heard the call for Najib to be removed.

"Out of 400 members, half of them responded with applause and cheers," he claimed.

"Muhyiddin was steady," he replied, when asked how the deputy prime minister reacted.

Some speculated that perhaps the call was made in relation to 1MDB president Arul Kanda and not Najib, but pundits dismissed this.

The division leader revealed that Muhyiddin was not slated to speak about 1MDB, but chose to do so because he knew that Umno members wanted answers on the scandal involving the government-owned investment fund.

"We knew about 1MDB issues from the opposition's claims; we just did not know if they had lied about it.

"We wanted our leaders to tell us the truth. We wanted answers from them," he said.

'We don't blindly follow leaders'

However, Pontian Wanita Umno chief Hasrunizah Hassan denied Umno members at the meeting clamoured for the removal of Najib.

"I didn't see anyone provoking and calling for the president to step down. We only agreed to probe and sack the 1MDB board for possible wrongdoings," she said.

Despite this, Hasrunizah implied that not all in Umno are on the same page as Najib on the

1MDB issue.

"The meeting has shown that Umno members do not follow their leaders blindly," she said, without elaborating.

Another leader, who also declined to be named, claimed that he stepped out for a smoke when Muhyiddin delivered his speech.

However, the leader said he would not be surprised if such a call was made and speculated that it could have originated from the Pagoh division, which is headed by Muhyiddin.

"Even if this incident happened, it was probably from the Pagoh division's grassroots as they want Muhyiddin to take over the premiership," he added.

Despite claiming that he was not present when Muhyiddin addressed the attendees, he however disclosed that he heard some members voicing their support for the number two, stating: "If you jump, we would jump with you."

The meeting was attended by four Umno divisions - Pontian, Bentong, Hulu Langat and Pagoh. It was a three-day course to 'strengthen the party' ahead of the next general election.

Also present were vice-president and training bureau chief Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Pahang Menteri Besar Adnan Yaakob and Deputy Finance Minister Ahmad Maslan, who is also Umno information chief.

Zahid has since revealed that Umno is investigating the case of the leaked video, while fingers pointed at Segambut Umno deputy chief Azri Mohd Zain as the culprit.

Segambut leader denies leaking video

Asked what action Umno proposed to take against this person, party executive secretary Ab Rauf Yusoh replied, "It's up to Zahid to decide."

"I have nothing to say. My role was just to facilitate the event organised by the training bureau," he told Malaysiakini when asked if the perpetrator was from the Segambut division.

Meanwhile, Suara TV quoted Azri as denying leaking the seven-minute video.

"There was a huge crowd; anyone could have taken the video. Yes, I was there as a member of the programme secretariat. But there were many people, close to 400.

"We told them not to take videos or snap photos, but the secretariat took recordings and photos for the purpose of keeping a record of the event.

"It is not right to accuse me only," he added.

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