

Pontian backs Muhyiddin, general assembly mooted

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By Anne Muhammad

Johor Umno's Pontian division will continue to defend Muhyiddin Yassin's status as the party's deputy president even though he has been sacked from the cabinet.

"The prime minister's decision (to sack Muhyiddin) has damaged Muhyiddin's credibility (but) we will (still) uphold and defend his status so that he remains a respected leader," Pontian Umno division chief Hasni Mohammad told Malaysiakini today.

Last Tuesday, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak sacked Muhyiddin in a cabinet reshuffle and replaced him with Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Pontian MP Ahmad Maslan was also affected, shifted from the deputy finance minister's post to being deputy minister of international trade and industry.

It is believed that Muhyiddin was axed due to his vocal criticisms of how Najib has dismally handled the debt-laden 1MDB.

Hasni said Muhyiddin had a right to voice out his opinions and that this did not threaten Najib (photo) or Umno.

However, he admitted it might have led to differences of opinion which in turn led to the sacking.

Meanwhile Simpang Renggam Umno chief Abdul Hamid Abdul Rahman said a general assembly must be held to determine what the Umno grassroots wanted.

"There are some members who are disappointed (with Muhyiddin's sacking) but we have to hear the majority. We need to have a general assembly and after that, we will know what the grassroots want," he said.

'Disappointed, hurt'

Yesterday, Johor Menteri Besar Khaled Nordin said Umno can no longer keep quiet in the face of corruption and stressed that Umno members must be loyal to the party, not individuals.

Former Kluang Umno division chief Gapar Gurrohu said this reflected the current sentiment of Johoreans.

"Johor is disappointed and hurt by Najib's decision. What was said by the menteri besar (Khaled), understand it yourself. Siapa makan cili terasa pedasnya," he said.

Dissent is brewing in Johor Umno. The Kluang division had on Saturday, approved a motion demanding Najib answer allegations about 1MDB, and the murder of Altantuya Shaariibuu.

Pasir Gudang Umno has also called its members to openly question Najib, when the party president opens the division's AGM this Sunday.

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