

## **My loyalty is to party, Shafie tells 'old pal' Najib**

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**Radzi Razak**

Umno vice-president Shafie Apdal has told his "old friend" and party president Najib Abdul Razak that his loyalty is to the party, not to any particular leader.

The axed minister said the party needs to gain the public's confidence, to avoid ending up as the opposition party in Sabah.

"This, you can convey to the prime minister. We have been friends for a long time.

"(But) our loyalty lies with the party, not just with friends. We need to get (the people's) confidence.

"In Sabah, we used to be the opposition for 10 years. That was very hard," he said, cheered by almost 2,000 at the Umno Semporna division annual general meeting today.

Shafie added that asking questions does not make someone a betrayer, as they only want what's best for the people, although doing so might put them at odds with the leader.

"It doesn't mean when you ask questions, you betray the party [...]

"It doesn't mean when you ask for a solution, you are a betrayer," he said to increasing cheers from the delegates, who continue to cheer him throughout his policy speech.

Shafie was removed as minister along with former deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin for being critical of the 1MDB scandal.

### **'Is it wrong to ask?'**

The Semporna Umno division chief whose, AGM today snubbed Najib in favour of deputy president and fellow ousted minister Muhyiddin, had been vocal on the controversial 1MDB fiasco.

He said he was only asking the questions to serve the people better and not to challenge anyone's leadership.

"That was the purpose. We said it with good intention. Are we not allowed to ask?

"I asked, why buy property in Penang for RM1.3 billion? No profit. Is it wrong to ask? Is it wrong?" Shafie asked to which the audience in the hall screamed, "No!"

The former rural and regional development minister also said he will continue to fight for Semporna and Sabah to be developed, saying that is his fight.

He also hoped the government would not forget the "small province" of Semporna, which were promised a bridge during Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's administration; the construction was delayed because of costs.

"I am waiting for development in this area. About Jambatan Bumbum (Bumbum Bridge), former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced (it) in the budget. Right away, I as a minister was called in by the economic council.

"(I) was asked what's the purpose on the economic and development? (It's) not just about safety; development is also needed. How can we not develop it?

"The bridge would only cost around RM300 to RM400 million. (What is that when) we can spend a lot to pay off debts costing billions of ringgit," he said.

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