

Truce will allow Muhyiddin, Shafie to buy time before striking

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The outcome of yesterday's Umno supreme council meeting will benefit party deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin and vice-president Mohd Shafie Apdal, who can now wait for president Najib Abdul Razak to get weaker before they strike.

Political analyst Wong Chin Huat believes the temporary truce between Najib and the two expelled from the cabinet will only last until more scandals involving Najib crop up.

"They are waiting for more durians to fall on Najib's head.... then they can say, 'it is not that we don't love Najib, but we love the party more'," Wong told Malaysiakini today.

Ideas chief executive Wan Saiful Wan Jan added that it would actually be bad for Muhyiddin and Shafie if they stopped complaining from now on.

"Until the issues that caused them to be sacked are truly resolved, staying silent could make people think this is an attempt to sweep things under the rug.

"Worse still, people might start accusing that every one of them is actually complicit and that is why they stopped complaining," Wan Saiful (photo) said.

Speculation was rife that Muhyiddin and Shafie would be sacked from Umno during the supreme council meeting.

However, Najib instead announced that the duo have pledged their commitment to strengthen the party.

Wong believes this outcome came about because neither Najib nor Muhyiddin has the strength to muscle the other out of the party.

Fellow political analyst James Chin believes Najib and his new Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi have yet to give up on their plans to get rid of Muhyiddin and Shafie.

"They are just buying time. Najib and Zahid must work harder now to get rid of the duo," Chin said.

Wong added that Zahid, especially, has good reason to want Muhyiddin out.

"He would not want Muhyiddin to come back and take his job," the Penang Institute fellow said.

Vote of no confidence not likely to be called

As for a vote of no confidence in the prime minister in Parliament, Wong said it was unlikely that Najib would allow such a vote to take place.

However, if such a motion is indeed tabled in Parliament, Wong said, it might actually be easier than expected to vote Najib out.

"People always think you need 112 votes. But actually all you need is a simple majority, based on the MPs who vote at that time.

"Which means that if some people decide not to vote or ponteng (don't turn up), the majority needed can be smaller," he said.

Nevertheless, Wong believes that no Umno MP will be willing to become the first to rebel against Najib in Parliament, and that the MPs would only rebel if someone else does it first.

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