

## **200 branch leaders challenge Najib to face party polls**

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Some 200 rebel Umno branch leaders have challenged their president Najib Abdul Razak to face a party election at the general assembly next year, in order to “cleanse the party” and restore the rakyat’s confidence.

Their spokesperson Kampung Railway Umno branch member Mohamad Said Midon said this is because grassroots members have allegedly lost confidence in Najib as party president and the cleansing process is necessary to ensure Umno’s relevance.

“If he (Najib) is smart, he should hold Umno’s party election in 2016. That is the most important thing before we face the general elections,” he said last night.

“Now our call is for Najib to resign and to hold the party elections in 2016 in order to ‘cleanse’ Umno, just like PAS had done.

“This is how we can restore Umno’s confidence and the people’s confidence (in Umno),” said Mohamad Said at a press conference after a closed-door ‘Democratising Umno’ event that was attended by branch leaders from all across the country.

This year’s PAS party elections saw the conservative ulama-backed faction under president Abdul Hadi Awang ousting their rivals from the progressive faction.

The progressive leaders who lost have since left PAS and formed the breakaway Parti Amanah Negara.

### **'Prove support at polls'**

While claiming that their movement will continue to seek Najib's resignation, Mohamad Said also said grassroots members would accept Najib if he wins the party election.

“That is Allah’s power and we would accept the outcome, but the election must be done honestly and fairly.

“We would accept if he wins, but he must change. Don’t continue like this.

“If things don’t change, GE14 may be Umno’s destruction,” he warned.

In a related development, Bandar Puteri Umno branch chief Mohd Shukor Mustaffa said Umno members now are in a state of disappointment, echoing an earlier assertion by Umno supreme council member Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who had described the anti-Najib groups as being those who are “disappointed”.

“I want to answer (Ismail Sabri), it is true that we are disappointed...very disappointed. We want to cry if we could.

“We voted for them but the trust that we had given our leaders are not being reciprocated. We are very disappointed,” he stressed.

As such, the group said they will continue to defend Umno and uphold their struggle to ensure that the party does not stray from its main agenda.

Also present at the event was former Gopeng Umno Wanita chief Hamidah Osman, who was recently expelled from the party on disciplinary grounds.

The group is part of a growing number of Umno grassroots who have been voicing out their criticisms of the party's current leadership.

Umno vice-president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor have said these members are being used to break up the Malay party, an allegation which the branch leaders have denied.

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