

## **Two can become one again in Umno, says Zahid**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Dec 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

Umno vice-president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has downplayed concerns on a possible split within the party if actions were to be taken against critics of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak over the RM2.6 billion donation scandal and operations of state-investment arm 1MDB.

In an interview with The Malay Mail, the deputy prime minister reportedly said that Umno will not suffer a “serious split” if deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin and vice-president Shafie Apdal were sacked from the party.

“The party has split before but it later became one. This will not be as bad as the last time but we will have to work hard to fix the situation should it happen,” said Zahid who referred to former premier Mahathir Mohamad’s sacking of PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim in 1998, both as deputy prime minister and Umno deputy president.

“Whether Muhyiddin and Shafie are suspended or expelled, one has to accept the decision made by the top level. It’s not about an individual’s decision but one that will be made by the supreme council. The decision will be made based on what is best for the party,” Zahid was quoted as saying.

It was previously reported that the Umno supreme council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday and decide whether Muhyiddin would be allowed to deliver his winding-up speech at the upcoming annual general assembly.

Zahid had reportedly said that both Muhyiddin and Shafie were expected to be present at the meeting, after their absence from the last meeting on Nov 24.

### **‘Umno has explained issues to grassroots’**

Zahid, meanwhile, also said that party leaders had met grassroots members nationwide to explain the party’s situation and 1MDB, among others.

“We have been explaining the party and government’s stand on several matters. It is a little late, but better late than never.

“Information has not been channeled to the members by the party but by the media. We have since given them a clearer picture of what has transpired and why certain decisions were made. We have received overwhelming support by all levels of leadership,” Zahid said, adding that the explanations had “brought temperatures down” among the grassroots.

Over the past few weeks, there have been growing urgings for Najib’s resignation from Umno division and branch leaders.

Nine Umno Teluk Kemang branch leaders were last week made to face the party's disciplinary committee after they urged this at a recent press conference.

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