

AGM crawling with PAS 'soldier ants': Umno leader
Malaysiakini.com
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Umno leaders have accused PAS of sending representatives to discreetly attend Umno's ongoing 61st annual general meeting (AGM) in Kuala Lumpur this week.

Party AGM secretary Abdul Rauf Yusof, however, said that they could not establish the numbers of what he called the opposition party's "soldier ants".

"So far we have not received any serious reports, but we hope that all parties will respect the new security measures taken (by the secretariat)," he said.

These measures include tightening the issuing of passes to delegates, observers and dignitaries, and boosting security with the assistance of Putra World Trade Centre's (PWTC) auxiliary police force.

"We have not received any information about the 'invasion', but I am informed that the opposition has smuggled representatives as 'soldier ants' into the Umno general assembly," said Abdul Rauf.

"Nevertheless, Umno welcomes anyone who comes to listen to the sincerity of our fight for the nation.

"We also welcome PAS to send their representatives to monitor the party elections since we feel there is nothing to hide from the public; Umno has long been transparent to all Malaysians about our party struggle," he said at a press conference at PWTC today.

He added that people are free to follow the assembly's proceedings via the closed-circuit broadcast outside the hall. This, he said, showed Umno's openness.

"We hope they will accept our new approach. We're waiting for everyone's feedback that will help us make refinements at the post-mortem after this assembly,"

'Report the truth'

However, he warned that such measures should not be abused by any party, referring to news portals *Malaysiakini* and *The Malaysian Insider*.

"Umno accepts them openly as we want to be more liberal and allow *The Malaysian Insider* and *Malaysiakini* reporters to cover the assembly this time," he said.

Malaysiakini journalists were told to leave the conference's media centre on Wednesday before two press cards were issued to the website the next day.

Abdul Rauf was nonetheless unable to respond when asked about reports on the party's official website, *Umno Online*, which attacked two *Malaysiakini* reports on the AGM.

"I've yet to see the reports ... I'm still waiting for information. I hope that *Malaysiakini*, as well as *The Malaysian Insider*, will be fair to us by reporting only what they have heard in truth."

The reports in question were on Umno president Najib Abdul Razak's opening speech, titled 'We must defend Putrajaya at all costs: Najib' and 'PM moves to snuff out racial debates'.

According to the party's website, one of the reports "gives the impression that Umno members are fools like Pak Pandir (a fool in Malaysian folklore) because they just follow the leaders' instructions blindly.

"While there are different viewpoints from different angles, we expect that which is true be allowed to remain so, and not be distorted," said Abdul Rauf.

"It's up to the public to judge whether what is reported is true or not. Umno has shown openness as proof that we are now more mature in championing the fate of our race than the opposition."

Yesterday the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission had launched an investigation into the *Malaysiakini* report under Section 211 and 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998.

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