

**Umno investigating defection claims**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Mar 21, 2008**

The ruling Barisan Nasional coalition is investigating claims that the opposition could seize power with the help of lawmakers who are considering defecting. MCPX

The dominant Umno said it is sending teams out to check on rumoured defections by members of coalition component parties alienated after disastrous March 8 election results.

tengku adnan mansor 02"Some people are saying this... we will get our intelligence to check," Umno secretary-general Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor said according to the New Straits Times.

"Why should they buy our people over when we've already won? They think we are weak because we lost in five states and we didn't get a two-thirds majority (in parliament)," he said.

Emboldened by the results, the worst in the BN coalition's half-century rule over Malaysia, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim has said that lawmakers have approached him about switching sides.

"I don't know how soon we can form the new government but we are moving in that direction," Anwar, a former deputy prime minister who was sacked and jailed a decade ago, said earlier this week.

**Supp denied its MP has quit**

Anwar said that coalition MPs from Sabah and Sarawak had contacted him to discuss switching sides. The power bloc there could unseat the government if it changed hands.

He has insisted that defectors will not be "bought" and other opposition figures have challenged the government to file a police report if they find evidence of improper payments.

richard riotAmid reports that the first of the defectors had resigned from the coalition, the Sarawak United People's Party told state media that the stories were false and that its lawmaker Richard Riot still belonged to the party.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has dismissed Anwar's plans, and downplayed suggestions of splits within Umno after a series of high-level resignations.

The premier's decision to streamline the cabinet and drop veteran politicians in a new line-up announced on Monday has also alienated government lawmakers who were overlooked.

Barisan Nasional will have 140 lawmakers in the new 222-seat parliament, against 199 in the outgoing 219-seat parliament. The opposition alliance won 80 seats from just 19 previously.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/80179>