

Gua Musang seeks sweeping changes in Umno
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 4, 2008

The Gua Musang Umno division today passed a resolution calling for the party leadership to hold an extraordinary general meeting to discuss the party's abysmal performance in last month's general election. MCPX

ku li tengku razaleigh and umno agm 241106The division, led by former party vice president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, agreed that the EGM - which it suggested to be held on May 11 or any other suitable date - was important to safeguard the future of the Malay race and the party.

The division also proposed several key amendments to the party constitution.

Among the main amendments proposed are the setting up of an independent 21-member committee to handle the election process of the party, creating a bigger and more powerful supreme council and the removal of the quota system for challengers to the party posts. On the new independent election committee, the division said that the committee should consist of members which has no posts in the party.

key resolution by gua musang umno divisionThe division proposed severe changes to the all-powerful supreme council, recommending that its membership is increased to 35, all to be directly chosen by the party members.

At present the delegates at the party's annual meeting elect 25 members while the party president has the powers to appoint another 12. Moreover, top party post holders are automatically allowed to sit in the council, bringing to total the final membership to about 50 people.

The Gua Musang division also proposed that all top posts in the party are open for election every three years, to be elected by the members of the respective wings of the party.

And in keeping with recent calls made by Tengku Razaleigh for the removal of the quota system for those wanting to contest in party polls, the division today proposed that the quota system is abolished and replaced with the previous system whereby a candidate would need just two nominations.

The division also recommended that the supreme council would be tasked to set the dates for the party's annual general meeting as well as the AGMs to be conducted by all branches and divisions.

More role for supreme council

The division also wants the new-look supreme council to choose candidates for general elections as well as those to be appointed to the various local municipal councils.

At present party president has the responsibility to choose election candidates while state leaders appoint persons to the local councils.

In all, the Gua Musang division has proposed four new clauses to be added the party

constitution and at the same time amending 11 other clauses, mostly in relation to the election of party posts, and six others totally removed.

Tengku Razaleigh, also the Gua Musang MP, is hoping that the reforms proposed by his division will revitalise the party to be able to regain the trust of the voters.

He has also offered himself for the top post, seeking to challenge Abdullah Ahmad Badawi during the party polls which would be held during the annual general meeting starting on Dec 16.

Tengku Razaleigh has said that he could heal the party if given the chance to lead it.

However before he could put up a proper challenge, he is required by the party regulations - under the quota system - to obtain backing from one-third of the party's divisions.

umno party post polls quotaThe system, introduced by immediate past president Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is in place to protect the top leaders from being challenged during party polls.

Under the system, a challenger would need about 58 nominations to contest for the president's post and 38 nominations for the deputy president's post.

In 2004, Tengku Razaleigh had sought to challenge Abdullah but was able to only obtain only one single nomination - that from his own division.

Absence of democracy

Earlier in his speech Tengku Razaleigh said there were several factors which contributed to Umno's weaknesses and the main cause was the absence of democracy in Umno when it imposed the requirement on the 30 percent divisional nominations needed to contest for the party presidency.

"The rationale is to curtail members from contesting for posts merely for the sake of contesting but I don't think there are Umno members who will simply challenge the party president without any strong reasons," he added.

He said that the quota system also created a situation where members were more loyal to the leaders instead of the party, as well as indulging in money politics in Umno.

The Gua Musang EGM today was attended by 423 delegates from 119 Umno branches in the division.

Also present were about 100 representatives from other states - Perlis (4), Kedah (5), Negri Sembilan (2), Selangor (8), Perak (12), Pahang (4), Johor (15), Terengganu (47) and Kuala Lumpur (2).