

Umno has no evidence to nail saboteurs
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 7, 2008

Umno deputy president Najib Abdul Razak today said that the party had no definite proof as to the identity of its members who had sabotaged the party during the recent general election. MCPX

He however said that the party had an idea on the individuals who were allegedly involved in sabotaging activity.

najib arms procurement defense 290307 najib "We have heard stories from party members and the defeated candidates but these are not sufficient for us to initiate disciplinary proceedings on any party member because there must be written reports (to the disciplinary committee)," he said today.

Najib, also the deputy prime minister, urged members with information on these saboteurs to lodge a formal complaint with the disciplinary committee so that investigation can be carried out and disciplinary action taken against those involved.

He added that so far the committee had not received any written complaints from anyone on the matter.

He also said if these saboteurs were proven guilty, they could face stern action including permanent expulsion from the party. Najib added that whatever action that would be taken would be based on concrete evidence and not based on unfounded allegations.

He also admitted that such acts of sabotage occurred every time there was an election, citing members' unhappiness over the choice of candidates and the political situation in certain areas as reasons for members to rebel.

However, he said that members should not have resorted to acts that could result in the defeat of the party no matter what their reasons were.

"The question of money not getting down to the ground (misappropriation of campaign fund) is a factor, but what is more serious is when we do things that can be construed as sabotage which resulted in the party being defeated," he said.

36 seats lost

Yesterday party president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, also the prime minister, said that internal saboteurs were the reason for the party to lose at least 14 parliamentary seats and 22 state seats in the March 8 general election.

NONE Abdullah said that these seats were earlier labelled as safe seats and were lost as a result of party members working against the party in those constituencies.

Abdullah added that if these seats were won, as projected initially, BN would have regained its two-thirds majority in Parliament as well as retained Kedah and Perak.

As it stands, the Umno-led BN is eight seats short of attaining a two-thirds majority in

Parliament.

The ruling coalition also managed to win only 14 state seats in Kedah with the opposition Pakatan Rakyat coalition winning the remaining 22 to take control of the state. Meanwhile in Perak, BN won 28 of the 59 state seats, again losing marginally to the opposition.

BN also lost control of Penang and Selangor and failed to regain Kelantan from PAS.

On another matter, Najib said that he would be visiting all Umno divisions and branches to listen to the views and suggestions from the grassroots leaders on their dissatisfactions.

"They may want to express their dissatisfaction against party members in their own areas and if there are any complaints, I will suggest that they lodge a formal report and submit it to the disciplinary committee for investigation to be carried out to determine the action to be taken," added the chairperson of the party's management committee.

As part of the nationwide visit, Najib will be heading towards Penang and Kedah on April 10. He is then scheduled to visit Selangor on April 14.

Umno, especially Abdullah, has come under tremendous pressure following the party's worst ever setback in the general election. Of the 117 parliamentary seats which the party contested, it only won 78.

Campaigning for the opposition

Meanwhile party vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin said that any action taken against the alleged saboteurs must be fair and based on facts and not hearsay.

He echoed Najib in saying that the party needed to gather evidence before a case was brought to the Umno disciplinary board for investigation to prove the allegations.

When asked by Bernama as to what entailed an act of sabotage, he said the matter was still being studied but did not dismiss that it could be linked to dissatisfaction over the choice of candidates in certain constituencies.

"Does sabotage mean refusing to campaign for the chosen party candidates? It can also mean campaigning for the opposition. We need to look at the factors."

"Although unhappy with the choice of candidates, the party members should have just accepted the top leaders' decisions. This is because the party is more important than the candidates," he said.