

Sapp's expulsion will 'invite serious repercussion'

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Barisan Nasional has been warned that there will be serious repercussions if the Sabah Progressive Party (Sapp) is expelled from the 14-member ruling coalition.
MCPX

Former Petagas assemblyperson James Ligunjang, who was once with PBS and Upko and now in Umno, said the expulsion of Sapp may not go down well with Sabahans and will invite trouble in the next general elections.

"The rakyat of Sabah may severely punish BN in the polls," he warned in a press statement faxed to Malaysiakini, a day after Sapp declared that it had lost confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Ligunjang said the stand taken by Sapp is "consistent with the concerns of Sabahans - oil royalty, illegal immigrants and the high inflation rate which can potentially increase the poverty level in Sabah".

Sapp has been telling PM the truth

The Umno leader stressed that Sapp has been telling the truth to Abdullah on these burning issues.

"I, for one, applaud what Sapp is doing as well as other courageous leaders like Anifah Aman (Chief Minister Musa Aman's brother and Kimanis MP), Ghapfur Salleh from Umno, Edmond Chong from PBS and Wilfred Bamburing from Upko," he said.

Ligunjang said these leaders were fearless in articulating the interests of Sabahans in Parliament. "I cannot say but be proud of them."

He also described Sabah as a 'rich state of poor people'.

Despite its abundance of natural resources in oil, timber, vast agricultural land and bountiful marine products, "Sabah tops in having the highest poverty rate at 23 percent in the nation", lamented Ligunjang.

The request by Sabahans for a higher oil royalty to be paid by the federal government - from the present 5 percent to 20 percent - has fallen on deaf ears.

"The very least the prime minister could have done was to consider some increase to assuage Malaysians in the oil-producing states namely Sabah, Sarawak and Terengganu."

Ligunjang argued that it was odd these three "oil-producing states are the poorest in the country".

Yong has backing from 4 of 6 elected reps

In addition, the prime minister's refusal to set up a royal commission on illegal immigrants in Sabah is "incomprehensive and indefensible", said the Umno leader.

Ligunjang also said the 'Borneonisation' of the civil service as stipulated in the Malaysia Agreement had been ignored by Kuala Lumpur.

Further, there was no tangible effort to review whether the spirit of the 20-point Malaysia Agreement - which was signed when Sabah joined Malaya to form Malaysia in 1963 - had been achieved.

"The very least the federal government could do is establish a committee to recommend remedial measures to correct the shortcomings," he said.

Sapp will be having its supreme council meeting tomorrow at 10am at its party headquarters in Bornion Centre, Kota Kinabalu, and a press conference is scheduled at 1 pm.

It is learnt that party president Yong Teck Lee has been able to convince at least four of the party's six elected representatives to back him. They include two MPs and two state assemblypersons, including state assistant minister Melanie Chia.

The other two state assemblypersons, including party deputy president and Sabah deputy chief minister Raymond Tan, are likely to break away if the supreme council decides to pull out from BN.

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