

All eyes on Sabah leaders at BN meeting
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Barisan Nasional top guns from all over the country, particularly those from Sabah and Sarawak, rallied behind embattled Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who was yesterday attacked by the ruling coalition's component party Sapp.
MCPX

abdullah sapp bn supreme council 190608The leaders had rushed to Kuala Lumpur today to attend an emergency meeting by the Barisan supreme council this afternoon to discuss Sapp's call for a no-confidence vote against the premier in Parliament.

Under normal circumstances, only two representatives from each party - usually the party leader and its secretary-general - would attend such meetings. At this meeting, however, some parties sent three or more representatives. The only party not invited to the meeting was Sapp.

The meeting resolved to unanimously condemn Sapp's no-confidence move and its president, Yong Teck Lee.

Long handshakes

Many of these component party leaders decided to leave immediately after the meeting, possibly to avoid the waiting orgy of pressmen, save for a few notable exceptions particularly those from Sabah and Sarawak.

bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 pairin kitinganTheir heavy and extended presence during the event was symbolic as there has been protracted rumours that MPs from Sabah and Sarawak would defect from Barisan and cause Abdullah's government to collapse.

Noticeably, Sabah and Sarawak leaders shook hands with Abdullah after the press conference, including Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) president Joseph Pairin Kitingan (left), who had longest handshake of the lot.

Speaking to the press later, both Pairin and Upko vice-president Makin Marcus Mojigoh claimed that "half" of Sapp's members were in the dark over Yong's controversial statement yesterday.

Below are excerpts of what several BN leaders told the press later:

Abdul Taib Mahmud, Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu Sarawak (PBB) president

bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 taib mahmudPak Lah didn't give us any incentives to remain in Barisan as we have principles and we stand by those principles. Whatever happens, we will stand together.

They (Sapp) had done this at a time that is most challenging for the country due to the increase in prices, and I find it most indecent and a betrayal to our party. It was done at the

time when we need everyone's support. I'm shocked and saddened by it.

Talking about having a vote of no-confidence is not acceptable at all. But this doesn't threaten us - there are only two of them. If the motion is moved, all our BN components will vote against it.

Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Gerakan acting president

When Barisan Nasional takes disciplinary action, it would be against a component party and not individual party members. Party members are the responsibility of their respective parties.

What Barisan is trying to do now is to establish the position of the party and figure out (whether the no-confidence call) was merely that of a few of its party leaders.

Joseph Kurup, Parti Bersatu Rakyat Sabah president

bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 joseph kurupSapp had already raised the same issues with the prime minister when he came to Sabah in March.

As the president of a party, we have to tell the people what Pak Lah had told us and I know the people of Sabah would understand.

We are human beings and when we work, we will surely display some weaknesses. It seems Yong cannot comprehend this.

Makin Marcus Mojigoh, United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) vice-president

There seem to be a lot of confusion within Sapp. Almost half of its members are denying the statement made by the party president (Yong)... We are not sure if this decision is made (by) an individual or (made) with the approval of everyone in the party.

Rafidah Aziz, Umno wanita president

bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 rafidah azizI strongly condemn their actions and we will make sure our component members defeat the (no-confidence) motion.

This doesn't weaken the party, it only makes us stronger. The Barisan spirit is very strong.

We have wholeheartedly sworn our allegiance to our party and our president. (Sapp's act) was unethical and unprincipled...

Joseph Pairin Kitingan, Parti Bersatu Sabah president

In Barisan Nasional, we emphasise political stability. This is not the first time that this has happened but this would not affect Barisan because only two members of parliament are involved.

The Sapp president is saying one thing, but more than half the members are denying his claims.

S Samy Vellu, MIC president

bn supreme council mt meeting sapp sabah issue 190608 samy velluThe prime minister has given all of us a chance to voice our feelings during the meeting.

That is why component parties in Barisan must provide input within the party and not outside. If we speak outside the party framework, we would causing problems to the party.

MIC fully supports the party and Barisan. I have instructed my people (one minister and two deputy ministers) to stay loyal to Barisan and oppose the motion (of no confidence).

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