

Sapp leaders 'threatened', says party boss
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Sapp leaders have been "threatened" since the party announced its decision to back a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, decried party chief Yong Teck Lee today.
MCPX

sapp sabah pc 180608 According to Yong, Sapp leaders have been advised by "friendly parties" not to underestimate the "risky consequences and likely threats" to party leaders.

Yong, a former Sabah chief minister, lamented in a statement emailed to Malaysiakini that "events in the last 24 hours have taken a disturbing turn".

The party boss said that a number of "intimidating and bullying tactics" have been reported over the past few days:

1. Several illegal banners instigating unspecified actions against Tawau MP Dr Chua Soon Bui have appeared overnight in Tawau.
2. A demonstration at the office of the Tawau MP - which was originally to be held after Friday prayers - will now be held tomorrow. On hearing about it, Sapp has advised their Tawau party officials to lodge police reports, take leave from the office and not to provoke the demonstrators.
3. At an Umno gathering of several hundred in Kota Kinabalu on Sunday, aggressive words inciting racial sentiments were hurled at Sapp leaders.
4. SMSes and unidentified phone calls implying threats to the party's two MPs and their aides.

"In view of this disturbing turn of events, Sapp has taken extra caution for the safety of the MPs by calling them back to the party HQ in Kota Kinabalu for consultations on the next course of action, including the safety of their persons and families and the security of their offices," Yong said.

Both Sapp MPs - Chua (Tawau) and Eric Enchin Majimbun (Sepanggar) - are conspicuously missing from today's parliamentary session in Kuala Lumpur today. It is unclear whether their absence was due to the threats.

Last Wednesday, Sapp dropped a bombshell at a press conference saying that the party - which is a member of the ruling coalition - planned to either move or back a motion of no confidence against Abdullah.

verwhelmed by voices of support

Yong however said that "Sapp appreciates and is very encouraged by the tremendous outpouring of support for the party's move (on vote of no confidence against the PM)".

sapp sabah meeting 200608 07 "Our perseverance on this course of action is very much helped in knowing that the people are with us."

He added that the party was deeply touched by Malaysians everywhere, including those in Peninsular Malaysia and overseas, in coming forward to support Sapp.

"We can feel the pent-up frustrations of ordinary Malaysians who want change - a change for the better."

He also said that Sapp has been overwhelmed by the voices of support in the printed media, Internet, emails, SMSes and blogs.

Yong added that media discussions whether in favour or against Sapp, have successfully brought Sabah's grievances to the fore.

"Never shall Sabah be looked down upon again," said the Sapp boss.

Malaysiakini also received SMSes this morning that Yong had been arrested, but it turned out to be untrue on checking with the party headquarters.

Test of confidence

The Pakatan Rakyat opposition alliance has said it is reluctant to mount a no-confidence vote, but would use a parliamentary debate today on an unpopular fuel price hike as a test of confidence in the embattled government.

"The Pakatan Rakyat are trying to highlight the problems with the government policies, and our opposition to today's motion shows the people's lack of confidence in Abdullah," said Azmin Ali, vice-president of PKR, which heads the alliance.

"This is something which we can use to send a message to the government. The present leadership, especially the prime minister and the entire cabinet, are incompetent to manage the economy and the future of Abdullah to lead this country is untenable," he told AFP.

However, the government's motion was passed this evening without all BN MPs toeing the line with 129 in favour, 78 against.

Abdullah has been fighting for his political survival since March elections that saw the opposition make unprecedented gains, netting a third of parliamentary seats and control of five states.

A 41 percent petrol price hike imposed earlier this month, which has triggered widespread outrage and public protests, has made Abdullah's position even more tenuous.