

Umno leader : stop asking Muhyiddin to quit
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An Umno leader today advised party leaders and members against calling for the resignation of Umno vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin for questioning the 2010 power transition plan.

Asa'ari Ibrahim, vice-head of the Bukit Katil Umno division, said Muhyiddin was right in giving his opinion as an Umno vice-president in representing the grassroots.

Asa'ari said, "As an Umno vice-president and chairman of the party's committee on the constitution, Muhyiddin knows that the decision of the supreme council must be endorsed by the party divisions at their respective annual meetings," he told Bernama.

Asa'ari was commenting on the call by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Zaid Ibrahim for Muhyiddin to resign if he was not happy with Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's leadership.

Asa'ari also expressed support for Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak's call for Umno members to be allowed to decide on the transition of power from the prime minister to the deputy prime minister.

He said the supreme council could decide on the matter but it was up to the Umno divisions to determine at their annual meetings whether they supported the decision.

"It is needless to create an uproar because the matter is in accordance with the party constitution. The supreme council does not have to stifle the decisions of the Umno divisions," he said, adding that Umno must keep alive the spirit of democracy to be seen as a democratic party.

Asa'ari's boss, the Bukit Katil division chief, is another party vice-president Mohd Ali Rustam, who has earlier supported Najib's call for party members to decide on the power transition.

Abdullah is facing increasing pressure to hand over power to Najib earlier than what he had promised or he could face a leadership revolt at the Umno general assembly this December.

Start rehabilitation process now

In a related development, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Johari Baharom, a known Abdullah supporter, said the transition of power issue should not be raised.

"Attention should be given to efforts to draw more support from among youths because we need them to strengthen the party," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

He said Umno leaders should embark on the rehabilitation process of the party now and not in June 2010 after Najib assumes the premiership.

"The Umno leadership must remain united and seek ways to rehabilitate the party. It should stop raising matters which have already been agreed upon by the Supreme Council as this will only bore the people," he was quoted as saying by Bernama.

On Wednesday, Muhyiddin had said that Abdullah should reconsider the transition of power plan as the period until June 2010 was too long.

The premier, who has come under tremendous pressure since the ruling coalition's setback in the March 8 general election, later expressed surprise over the call.

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