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'Representation to stay'

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PM: Parties will still be in Cabinet

KUALA LUMPUR: Despite losing many leaders from Barisan Nasional component parties in the general election, the Prime Minister has given an assurance that these parties would still be represented in the Cabinet.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi brushed aside concerns that he would have a tough time picking his new Cabinet.

"Why? Why should there be a problem? It is not like they (component parties) are without any assemblymen (and) parliamentarian," he told reporters after chairing the Umno and Barisan supreme council meetings yesterday.

Among the defeated party leaders were MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, deputy president Datuk G. Palanivel and vice-president S. Sothinathan, People's Progressive Party (PPP) president M. Kayveas, Gerakan acting president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, MCA vice-president Datuk Donald Lim and Wanita MCA deputy chief Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun.

Two Umno ministers, Datuk Seri Aziz Shamsuddin and Datuk Seri Zainuddin Maidin, also did not win.

In the elections, the MCA won 15 parliamentary seats, MIC three and Gerakan two. PPP did not win any seat.

Abdullah emphasised that the Barisan government is for all Malaysians and would serve the interest of minority communities which do not have representation in the Cabinet.



Making a point: Abdullah speaking during the press conference as Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak look on in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"We are the government of Barisan Nasional. We speak for each other. We don't say 'I'm there, I only speak for the Malays, I don't speak for anyone else'.

"I have said that I am the Prime Minister for all. I stand by that," he said.

Asked if he discussed the formation of the Cabinet at the two meetings, he said: "Not yet. I have just been sworn in."

Later, Kayveas said PPP would remain relevant

to the people although they did not have representation in Parliament or the Cabinet.

"PPP has always been relevant without all these representations. PPP has never been in the Cabinet, so it is no big deal," said the former deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Samy Vellu refused to comment when met by reporters after the Barisan meeting.

"I have nothing to say. I am very relaxed, away from all the pressure," he said.