

Newspaper	THE STAR
Date	9 MARCH 2015

Umno division chiefs rally behind Najib

160 attend closed-door meeting to listen to president's explanations on political issues

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS and RAZAK AHMAD
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno division chiefs nationwide rallied behind their president, who they say is under attack and being slandered over his leadership.

Of Umno's 191 division heads, 160 attended a closed-door gathering to express their support and solidarity with Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and to listen to his explanations on current political issues, particularly the controversy over 1MDB.

Spokesman for the organiser Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said all those who were absent, including Umno deputy president and Pagoh division chief Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, gave their reasons prior to the gathering.

"They also gave their assurances in support of the initiative," he added.

He said Muhyiddin had expressed his desire to attend, but couldn't because he had a prior commitment.

"People should not read too much into his absence at the meeting," he added.

Yesterday's gathering which was held at the Umno headquarters here and themed "Solidarity With The Umno President" was organised on the initiative of the division heads themselves, said Ismail Sabri.

"We wanted to give the president our undivided support because he has been facing baseless criticisms and slandered lately.



Stand united: Umno members showing support for Najib during the closed-door gathering in Kuala Lumpur.

"We feel it is our joint responsibility to be with him in facing this pressure," he said after the 90-minute meeting.

On the 1MDB issue, Ismail Sabri said Najib as the Prime Minister gave a detailed explanation and maintained his stand that no one would be spared if they were guilty of any wrongdoing.

"We are pleased that he gave us this assur-

ance. Our primary concern is that there should be no abuse of power and mismanagement within 1MDB," he said.

Najib had also instructed division chiefs to use the upcoming branch meetings to explain to the grassroots on the Government's directive to the Auditor-General to independently verify 1MDB's accounts and submit its findings to the Public Accounts Committee.

Temerloh division chief Datuk Mohd Sharkar Shamsudin said Najib appeared to be pleased with the support shown by the division chiefs, but was slightly embarrassed by it.

Party vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the division chiefs were happy with Najib's explanation on various issues.

"They include internal party matters as well as national issues and we should be supporting the president on this. I am personally very satisfied with the meeting," he said.

Fellow vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said there had been much speculation on unity and solidarity in Umno of late, all of which were baseless.

Hishammuddin said Najib reiterated during the meeting that action would be taken if there was any wrongdoing involving 1MDB.

Bukit Mertajam division chief Datuk Musa Sheikh Fadzir was pleased with the president's explanation, particularly his commitment to bring anyone who had committed wrongdoing in 1MDB to justice.

"This may not be a big issue among Umno members, but I will bring up and explain the issue nonetheless so that they will not be bought in by the lies," he said.

Langkawi division chief Datuk Nawawi Ahmad said the fact that 1MDB's accounts would be looked into by the Auditor-General and PAC was proof of the Government's transparency.