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PM: I will not betray my father's struggles

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has defended his mandate as Umno president, saying that he was elected in a more democratic party election compared to previous presidents including Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Najib said that prior to his presidency, it was tough for anyone to challenge the incumbents as the rules were stacked against them due to a strict quota system whereby an aspirant needed a certain number of nomination to qualify as candidates.

"That was why Tun Dr Mahathir could stay on for 22 years.

"If I wanted to remain as president for that long, I would not have amended the party constitution to make the election more democratic.

"I would want to be elected in a democratic and truly sincere manner, and since I won the presidency in a democratic way, why ask me to step down?"

"I will continue to serve as president and if there are weaknesses I will rectify them," Najib told a gathering of Umno veterans at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

In 2009, Umno changed the rules for its election for party positions by widening the number of members, who could vote and by abolishing



Continued backing: Umno veterans showing their support for Najib during the gathering at PWTC.

the nomination quota system.

The amendments took effect six months after Najib took over as Umno president from Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He went on to retain his position in the last party election in 2013.

Najib reassured the veterans as well as party members in general that he would always give priority to Umno's struggle to defend the Malays and bumiputras.

"What I ask in return is to be given the opportunity to complete this

agenda for our country.

"Why disrupt this? We need to meet our goal of becoming a developed country in 2020, which is just five years away," said the Prime Minister.

Najib said he became active in politics in 1976 after the death of his father Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in order to continue the struggle of the country's second Prime Minister.

"As his son, I am determined to continue my father's struggle to bring our country, all Malaysians

including Malays, to a higher level of success," he added.

Najib pledged to do his best as Umno president and Prime Minister with the support of the party's supreme council and Cabinet colleagues.

"I am not the son who betrays his father's struggle, but will continue to strengthen it.

"However, I will need support to succeed. The support for me is not personal, but rather it is for the party," he added.