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'People's support for Najib strong'

CLEAR SIGNAL: Huge welcoming crowd at KLIA for PM reflects BN stability, says strategic communications director

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Umno and Barisan Nasional supporters welcoming Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the Bunga Raya Complex of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang yesterday. Behind him is Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi. Bernama pic

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak returned yesterday to a rousing welcome after visits to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, and Milan, Italy.

More than 1,000 people thronged the Bunga Raya Complex of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport here yesterday to welcome home the prime minister and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor.

The show of support was a clear and strong signal that the people were behind the prime minister. Najib's watershed address at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly no doubt had a part in the hero's welcome he received yesterday.

In New York, Najib had spoken out against the Islamic State and the atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinians, in particular, the siege on the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

Barisan Nasional (BN) strategic communications director Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said the large crowd also sent a strong signal to those inside and outside of Umno and BN.

"Aside from the strong support, the big turnout also tells people not

to disrupt the party's stability.

"This is the signal that the crowd (comprising BN leaders and supporters) is sending out.

"When the prime minister is strong, he can deal with economic issues (without being distracted)," he said.

Najib, who is also Umno president and BN chairman, was away for nearly two weeks to attend the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York and a three-day visit to Milan, Italy.

Present to welcome him home were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk

Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa and several ministers, including Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai and Sports and Youth Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

Rahman's view was shared by Umno vice-president Datuk Serj Hishammuddin Hussein, who was touched by the large turnout. He said it showed that the support for Najib did not come from only party leaders but also the grassroots.

The crowd carried banners bearing slogans pledging their support for Najib and welcoming him home.

Members from Umno divisions, including Bera and Jasin, as well as from BN component parties, had gathered as early as 7am outside the complex to welcome Najib home.

They chanted support for Najib as he alighted from the aircraft, which touched down at 9.55am.

Those waiting at the tarmac rushed to shake hands with Najib and presented a bouquet to Rosmah.

Tengku Adnan, who is also Umno

secretary-general, said criticisms against Najib would not weaken his position as the leader of the nation but only serve to strengthen it.

After launching the Residensi KepongMas Federal Territory Affordable Housing (RumaWIP) project yesterday, Tengku Adnan said Zahid and other senior Umno officials would be touring the states to explain current affairs to members.

He said outsiders should not meddle with party affairs as the party leadership and members knew how to solve issues within the party.