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# Najib rallies troops for next polls

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**'BE PREPARED':** He urges members to work for better election results

**KUALA LUMPUR**

**D**ATUK Seri Najib Razak yesterday sounded the election war drums during his closed-door session with Umno delegates at the start of the party's annual general assembly.

He rallied the troops to begin preparing for the 14th General Election, although the next polls are not due by June 2018.

Delegates said Najib delivered a strong message for the party to work harder to ensure that Barisan Nasional clinches much better results than in the 2013 general elections. BN currently holds 134 of the 222 parliamentary seats.

As expected, Najib gave no hints on election timing, except to say the party must be in election mode.

They said Najib even spelt out the selection criteria for potential Umno candidates.

He was quoted as saying that people with a thick curricular vitae and



**Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak, vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Supreme Council members at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Luqman Hakim Zubir**

or those who lobbied hard might not necessarily get nominated.

"The president indicated that he would introduce a set of screening methods in selecting candidates for the next election and the delegates welcomed it," a delegate said, adding that the party president would be ticking a lot more check boxes in determining his winning candidates.

In his hour-long speech, amid a sea of red in a sign of harmony in the party, Najib also spoke on the need to preserve Malay political power

under Umno and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's unholy alliance with DAP.

"It had delegates thinking about how Islam and Malays would take a back seat if DAP ever comes into power," he said.

He also exposed how currency speculator George Soros had a hand in funding certain groups in Malaysia to undermine the government.

Perak Umno information chief Datuk Mohd Khusairi Abdul Talib, who is also Tanjung Malim Umno

division chief, said Najib wanted the election machinery at all levels to be as prepared as it could be for the polls.

"Najib reminded Umno leaders to continue serving the people as they would be the ones to determine the party's future. Although we have already made preparations, we get the president's message, which is to work harder and organise more programmes to win the people's minds and hearts," he said.

A delegate from Sabah said Najib's message ultimately set the tone for

the assembly which ends Saturday.

"We were encouraged by the president's message that Umno should have the confidence of winning (in the general election) as BN has achieved commendable results in the past few by-elections and polls in Sarawak," he said.

The same delegate shared Najib's message to party members, which warned them of foreign interference in domestic affairs.

He said Najib also drew links between Soros and certain pro-opposition organisations in the country and warned that Soros was among the new threats to Umno.

Maran Umno deputy chief Datuk Shahaniza Shamsuddin said Najib's warning on foreign interference and the risks it posed to the party and country as a whole was important.

She said Najib's pledge that more opportunities be given to women and youth members to be fielded as candidates in the next election was well received.

"The president's idea of a winnable candidate is clearly a person who understands the grassroots' aspirations, loved by them and always goes to the ground to solve their problems," she said.

"He or she should not be known as a person who is only good at lobbying to become a candidate".