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DR M DEFENDS UMNO LEADERS' ENTRY INTO BERSATU

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If they are bad people, we will reject them, says party chairman

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PRIME MINISTER Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has defended his overtures to reel in former Umno lawmakers into Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia.

On the heels of criticism lobbed by DAP and PKR leaders against the move, Dr Mahathir, who is also Bersatu chairman, said several requirements were imposed on the former Umno leaders entering his party.

"We have set the terms (for the former Umno leaders or lawmakers to be part of Bersatu).

"They have to be independents and will be individually assessed before joining Bersatu," Dr Mahathir said after opening the Scholar's Library at the Islamic Arts Museum here yesterday.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said: "There are good and bad people. I myself was (a former) Umno member.

"But (DAP adviser Lim) Kit Siang can accept me. If they are bad people, then we will reject them."

On statements by DAP and PKR leaders who disagreed with

the move of having former Umno leaders join Bersatu, Dr Mahathir said there

were also those in Bersatu who shared the same sentiment.

"There are even those in Bersatu who disagreed. But that is their personal opinion. I am a former Umno member.

"Otherwise, they (Pakatan Harapan leaders) would not have allowed me to form a party of former Umno members."

After the Sabah Umno exodus, six more Umno members of parliament left the party yesterday.

They included Datuk Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad, who is Mersing

member of parliament, Datuk Shabudin Yahaya (Tasik Gelugor), Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin (Larut), Datuk Mohamad Fasih Mohd Fakeh (Sabak Bernam), Datuk Seri Ikmal Hisham Abdul Aziz (Tanah Merah) and Datuk Rosol Wahid (Hulu Terengganu).

Dr Mahathir advised the public to wait for further development concerning a graft case that implicated his political secretary, Muhammad Zahid Md Arip.

It was reported that Zahid, who is former Felda chairman Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad's former special officer, was mentioned in nine out of 10 corruption charges levelled against Isa.

Zahid was appointed as Dr Mahathir's political secretary on May 30.

"Let's wait and see if the charges (regarding Zahid's involvement) are true. We cannot simply accuse anyone (without proof)."

“We have set the terms (for the former Umno leaders or lawmakers to be part of Bersatu). They have to be independents and will be individually assessed before joining Bersatu.”

TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD
Parti Pribumi Bersatu
Malaysia chairman