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## 2 ex-ministers deny signing support letter for Dr M

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Two former ministers have denied claims that they were among 33 Umno members of parliament who signed a letter expressing support for the leadership of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Bera MP Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who was former rural and regional development minister, said he did not sign any such letter of support.

"If the letter existed, then I am not one of them (those who signed)," he told the *New Sunday Times* yesterday.

Ismail was asked to comment on the revelation by former domestic trade, cooperatives and consumerism minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin that 36 Barisan Nasional MPs had signed a letter to express support for Dr Mahathir last month.

Hamzah, who is Larut MP, and five other Umno lawmakers left the party on Friday citing loss of confidence in the leadership of party president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

The five MPs are Datuk Rosol Wahid (Hulu Terengganu), Datuk Seri Ikmal Hisham Abdul Aziz

(Tanah Merah), Datuk Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad (Mersing), Datuk Shabudin Yahaya (Tasik Gelugor) and Datuk Mohamad Fasihah Mohd Fakeh (Sabak Bernam).

Their departure came after the exodus of Sabah Umno MPs, senators and state assemblymen on Wednesday.

In an exclusive interview with the *New Straits Times* Press, Hamzah said the decision to support the leadership of Dr Mahathir was not made hastily.

He also warned of a third wave of mass defection involving 10 MPs if Zahid refused to resign as president.

Former higher education minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh urged all quarters not to believe in rumours regarding his political future.

Idris, who is Besut MP, is among the 10 MPs rumoured to leave the party.

"Do not believe (in such rumours)."

MIC vice-president Datuk C. Sivarraajh, however, gave credence to the existence of the letter.

Sivarraajh said expressing support for Dr Mahathir's leadership

was not equivalent to jumping ship or switching political alliance.

NSTP, at press time, is getting comments from Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican (Kepala Batas), Mohd Shahar Abdullah (Paya Besar), Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan (Pontian) and Datuk Halimah Mohamad Sadique (Kota Tinggi) on the matter.

In **Kangar**, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) Supreme Council member Wan Saiful Wan Jan said Umno MPs jumping ship proved that what he said months ago was not a lie, as claimed by several quarters.

"From the start, I have been saying that there have been meetings between Umno MPs and assemblymen and PPBM, not just in Perlis but all over Malaysia.

"It is clear what other PPBM leaders and myself have been saying is a reality and that we have never lied to the people," he said at the 2018 Perlis Motorday outside the Tuanku Syed Putra stadium here yesterday.

Wan Saiful said he did not deny the possibility of more Umno members quitting the party.

"They (Umno members) were so excited when they met the PPBM leadership to talk about leaving the party (Umno)."



**Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob**