

## **'Whos' who should head for the exit**

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### **All Umno members must be Khalid al-Walids as much as they can**

UMNO president Datuk Seri Najib Razak has said that the party, which leads the ruling Barisan Nasional, is ready to face the general election.

The prime minister, who is also BN chairman, also said at the Umno annual general assembly recently that more new faces would be fielded in the next general election -- both for Umno and the ruling coalition.

Closer to home, Kedah Umno could help make Najib's task easier as he makes changes and decides on the winnable candidates for the state.

And change Kedah Umno must. It must heed Najib's call for political transformation, especially after BN's dismal performance in the 2008 general election.

Without naming names, most Kedah Umno members and "orang Umno Kedah" know "who" should give way.

Equally important are those "whos" should be shown the way.

The first group of "whos" is fewer than the second "whos".

The first "whos" are assemblymen who are not quite up the mark. And they know who they are.

The second group comprises "problematic" assemblymen, those caught in legal tangles and those allegedly involved in abuse of power.

There is a third group of which the party leadership needs to be wary. They jostle to be candidates but have no or poor track records, including some at the divisional level.

This group includes those who behaved in a manner that was detrimental, including sabotage, to Umno and BN in the last general election and in a few cases, in previous general elections, too.

This handful, some of whom also behaved like warlords, might have escaped disciplinary action but "orang Umno Kedah" know who they are and the rogue few also know who they are.

The majority of the people of Kedah made their choice in 2008. Kedah Umno members and their leaders can help them decide in the party's and BN's favour in the next general election.

Umno has done a lot for its members and it is time they repaid the party. To rephrase an oft-quoted line, Umno members must ask not what the party can do for them but what they can and should do for the party.

They must heed Najib's Umno-before-self call.

They must be magnanimous and help the party president rebuild and strengthen Umno. If there is an opportunity for them to help Umno, then this is the time.

BN lost Kedah in the last general election not because the opposition was strong but because Umno and the ruling coalition were weak.

Of the total 36 state seats, Umno won 12 while Gerakan and MCA won one each. Umno lost seven of its strongholds, including Tanjung Dawai, where it lost to Pas by a mere 79 votes.

In Jeneri, Umno lost to Pas by 167 votes and Bukit Lada by 208 votes.

Local issues, especially involving grassroots leadership, influenced the outcome. Poor choice of candidates and sabotage stood out as the culprits.

Najib must be firm and, as the saying goes, must be seen to be firm. There must be no flip-flops and stern action must be taken (and be seen to be taken) against those who betrayed the party in any way, shape or form.

This analysis by no means serves as the only remedy to Kedah Umno and BN's ills.

Some changes with Umno incumbents and the introduction of new faces and, by extension, changes and new faces for Kedah BN, must also be considered.

Najib has come a long way on damage control for Umno and BN. Numerous policies and programmes have helped to recapture the hearts and minds of the people, including those who had abandoned the ruling coalition in 2008.

All the promises and sumpah bai'ah (oath of loyalty) made by Umno grassroots leaders at the Putra World Trade Centre last Saturday would mean nothing if they do not honour their word.

Najib had cited the sacrifices by Khalid al-Walid, one of the most feared and successful Islamic generals, who willingly stepped down as army commander at the request of caliph Umar.

A strong believer that Islam takes precedence over everything else, including oneself, he soldiered on.

And Umno members must all try to be Khalid al-Walids as much as they can.

Incidentally, Khalid's successor, Abu Ubaidah, appointed him as head of the cavalry and as a military adviser.

Source: <http://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnist/whos-who-should-head-for-the-exit-1.16923>