

Umno, BN Not Forcing Their Elected Representatives To Step Down
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SEREMBAN, Dec 13 (Bernama) -- Umno and Barisan Nasional (BN) are not forcing their state assemblymen and members of parliament to announce their stepping down as elected representatives, but those who wish are free to do so.

Umno information chief Datuk Ahmad Maslan said when this happened, it provided the opportunity for other leaders to carry out the responsibilities.

"It's not because they are not good, for example, Bukit Nanning assemblyman Datuk Abdullah Md Ali who announced yesterday that he would not be contesting in the 13th general election.

"I know Datuk Abdullah, who is hardworking and still energetic although he is aged 68. But he wishes to make way for someone else and we thank him for that," he said of Abdullah's announcement.

Ahmad had earlier opened the Negeri Sembilan Youth Transformation Convention organised by the Negeri Sembilan Youth Council, here, today.

Ahmad, who is also Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said he appreciated the decision of veteran and experienced politicians like Abdullah.

"This spirit came about following the recent Umno General Assembly...without us forcing them to step down to make way for others, and we have never done that.

"But we've heard of similar intentions like from two or three Johor MCA leaders and from (Gerakan president) Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, as well as an MP from Pahang.

"Perhaps some have expressed their intention in writing to the party top leadership, we don't know. What we know of are the ones that have been publicly announced," he said.

On the criteria to be accepted as winnable candidates, Ahmad said this was regardless of age, position, education and so on.

"If we look at the choice of candidates in the by-elections that we won, in Tenang we had an assistant district officer, in Galas someone with SPM qualification and the division's secretary but has been living and working there for a long time, in Batu Sapi we had the wife of the incumbent who was skilled in a road accident, and in Kerdu, a young local who is an Al-Azhar University graduate.

"This means we don't have a fixed criteria...but what is important is fielding people who we believe can win.

"We have many winnable candidates but we want the best winnable candidates," he said.

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