

Umno blocked from intervening in RoS suit
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 22 — Umno, the ruling Barisan Nasional's lynchpin, was blocked by the High Court today from intervening in a former member's suit against the Registrar of Societies (RoS).

The case recalls the 1987 fractious court-induced split which made the ruling Malay party illegal and saw the law amended that effectively barred members from taking internal disputes to court.

In dismissing the grand old Malay party's bid High Court judge Abang Iskandar Abang Hashim said Umno had at best, an "indirect interest" in the case that could allow sacked party member, Amran Abdul Rahman, to be reinstated through the backdoor.

He said the dispute centred on the RoS' refusal to supply to Amran documents that can be supplied to anyone under the law.

"Those documents are now in the public domain which RoS are required under the law to supply," the judge said in open court today.

Justice Abang Iskandar also ordered Umno to pay RM3,000 in court costs.

Amran was Tanah Merah Umno secretary when he was stripped of his membership on March 1 last year, allegedly for breaking Article 20.7 of the party constitution by taking Pondok Lama division chief Datuk Ikmal Hisham to court.

"This application for a judicial review [by Amran] is... for him to go after the big fish to challenge Umno Malaysia as illegal in order to challenge his sacking," Umno lawyer Datuk Hafarizam Harun said previously in his leave application to be made intervenor.

"It's an abuse of court process," he added.

But Amran's lawyer, Rangunath Kesavan, disagreed.

The former Bar Council chief argued that Amran's dispute at the present stage was solely with the RoS, which had denied the ex-party man's access to registration documents for 126 branches and 14 divisions in Umno Kelantan, despite his right to it under law.

Rangunath stressed that Umno was yet to be involved directly and so had no reason to be made an intervenor.

Under Section 10 of the Societies' Act, any person has the right to request information on any registered organisation to be disclosed as long as the information is not for the society's accounts, which are limited to its members.

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