

**Umno needs help for voter support, party leaders admit**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 22 — Umno needs to be “calculative” and befriend as many groups and organisations as possible to gain voter support in time for the upcoming polls, party leaders have said.

Top Umno leaders said the party could not afford to be “picky” about which groups to align itself with, and that everything must be done with only one goal in mind: winning the next election.

Some appeared to agree with remarks made by former Umno president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed, who said the party could not afford to make enemies of groups like Perkasa if it wanted to regain crucial Malay votes.

“We need to be calculative with whom to associate ourselves with; the criteria is those who can bring more support to the party,” Tangga Batu MP Datuk Idris Haron told The Malaysian Insider.

“Anything we do must have a political dividend.”

The Umno supreme council member said there was no point ignoring or marginalising certain groups when these could help Umno gain voter support, especially among the Malays.

“We cannot be too particular. What is important is that we win the elections,” he added.

Kota Belud MP Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan said that Umno had over the years proven that it fought for not just the Malays but for other races as well.

“Umno is the single largest party and it’s the backbone of the government. So whatever we say will impact the nation,” he told The Malaysian Insider.

The Umno leader said that although Malays should always be prioritised, the party needed to be mindful of its actions as these could affect the future of Barisan Nasional (BN).

“We are friendly to everybody,” said Abdul Rahman.

Another Umno leader, Datuk Bung Mokhtar Radin, said that it was crucial for Umno to cosy up to groups like Perkasa, and that such a move would strengthen Malay support for Umno before the upcoming polls.

“Yes, we need to be friendly to Perkasa, but Umno also needs to be friendly to everybody,” he added.

Umno is heading into what is likely to be its last annual assembly before a general election expected early next year.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is said to need a marked improvement from the last polls to retain his position and only a return of BN's customary two-thirds majority of Parliament can guarantee he remains in office.

BN ceded 82 federal seats and four state governments to the opposition in the landmark March 2008 election.

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