

Ex-minister flays media, detractors for misreporting statement
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 15 — Under siege for his recent claim that Barisan Nasional (BN) had used money to buy votes during past elections, former Umno minister Tan Sri Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir lashed out today at the media for twisting his words.

The 73-year-old political veteran said he would not retract his controversial statement but denied he had included voters in Kulim-Bandar Baharu, his former constituency, in the widely-published accusation.

"I have said that the use of money to buy votes did occur since 40 years ago.

"But in Kulim, which I represented for 30 years, we have never and have never needed to buy votes, whether during party polls or the general election.

"It was never like that in my previous statement," he told a press conference at his office at the Mines Waterfront Business Park here today.

Abdul Kadir (picture) railed against his detractors for picking up on the purportedly inaccurate statement and attacking him for it, even labelling them "crazy" and saying they should be sent to Hospital Bahagia, a well known hospital for mental patients in Tanjung Rambutan, Perak.

Last Sunday, media reports quoted Kampung Air Merah Umno branch chairman Mat Saad Osman as criticising Abdul Kadir for his accusations against BN and urging the former federal minister to sue the media if he was indeed misquoted.

Abdul Kadir said he would not press charges against anyone but repeatedly urged the press, particularly those from the mainstream media, to report his statements fairly and accurately.

He denied that his accusation on money politics in BN were made out of frustration that he no longer wields influence in Umno, stressing that his relationship with the present BN government and Umno leadership remains warm.

Abdul Kadir, who is now Amanah (Angkatan Amanah Merdeka) deputy president, said he has never sought for posts or contracts from the BN leadership and therefore had no reason to be "frustrated".

"Why should I? I used to be a minister and at the height of my career, I resigned to enter the private sector," he said.

Abdul Kadir later told the media that despite his accusations, it was time now to "move on" and not dwell on past mistakes.

He expressed confidence that the current leadership under Datuk Seri Najib Razak would no

longer use money to buy votes, pointing out that voters today are more enlightened than before.

"I don't want to dwell on things in the past because it brings us no good.

"I am confident the party leadership knows the things we did in the past that were not good... perhaps at the time such actions were overlooked but today it is no longer the case," he said.

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