

**Over-dominant Umno will cost Selangor BN, says Khir Toyo**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

SHAH ALAM, March 30 — An over-dominant Umno in Selangor will cost Barisan Nasional (BN) crucial voter support in the next general election as it will push non-Malays towards Pakatan Rakyat (PR), Dr Mohd Khir Toyo has said.

The former Selangor menteri besar said Selangor's problem was that BN component parties were not "unified" — the MCA, MIC and Gerakan have failed to play their part in attracting new, young voters which left Umno no choice but to solidify its own support base in preparations for the upcoming polls.

"When Umno becomes more dominant, they are going to push away the non-Malay votes. That's another problem. One of reason why (during) my term Chinese did not vote for BN because Umno is too dominant in Selangor. Locally we are too dominant.

"Now we (might be) losing Selangor if this trend continues... it is a bit difficult to win. Our problem is getting urban votes," he told The Malaysian Insider in an exclusive interview.

The Sungai Panjang assemblyman's term as Selangor MB ended when BN lost to PR in the 2008 general election. PR won 36 of the 56 state seats, and PKR's Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim replaced Khir as MB.

Khir (picture) stressed that an "almost" balanced voter demographic between Malays and non-Malays in the state made it difficult for BN to gain full electoral support as only Malay votes were currently with BN.

"Can BN take over Selangor with Umno? We go back to percentage of voters, 52 per cent if I am not mistaken are non-Malays.

"(But) the problem is that some of the seats which we (Umno) won in 2008 were below 500 votes... but Umno feels all seats are winnable because they only get feedback from Malays," he lamented.

Khir said that while Umno had been diligently engaging with the Malay community in Selangor and getting positive feedback, component parties like the MCA and MIC have yet to do the same.

"We need to get the report from the non-Malays... Umno does it, but component parties should do it for Chinese and Indians.

"The point is if Umno is too dominant, the dominance makes non-Malays uncomfortable. They then vote for PR in default even though PR has not done anything," he added.

The solution, said Khir, was for BN to "empower" MCA, MIC, and Gerakan party leaders by allowing them to announce allocations and projects for their own communities instead of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak doing so.

The Umno leader said that non-Malays had lost "respect" for BN component party leaders as they were seen as not being able to do anything to help their own communities.

"That is why now we have to give more power to MCA, MIC. Make sure their party presidents announce school allocations to their own communities. If we hope for the PM and deputy prime minister to do this, Umno will be seen as too dominant, and the Chinese will lose respect for their own leaders.

"That's the problem now I always say, that now we need to enhance opportunities to other party leaders to make their own decisions and we give them allocations," he stressed.

Khair praised Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for empowering component party leaders during his tenure as PM, and that that was why past leaders like Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik were respected.

"Umno's strength alone cannot pull non-Malays like we have done with Malays. Selangor BN needs to move as BN, not Umno. We're on the last lap before elections

"That's why Samy Vellu was like the king for his race. Because he announced the allocations, not Dr Mahathir. Last time component leaders were very strong and respected because they went down to the ground and gave things... Current ministers have no 'oomph' factor. Look at (Datuk Seri) Liow (Tiong Lai) and (Datuk Seri) Kong Cho Ha."

Khair said it was still not too late to turn the tide to BN's favour, but that changes must be made immediately to turn non-Malay voter support towards BN.

"PR has not fulfilled their election promises even though they say they have a lot of reserves.

"I'm very worried about Selangor," Khair said bluntly.

But Najib said yesterday that BN was ready to win the next general election as well as take back Selangor, and that public feedback has been encouraging.

He said people have been telling him BN has regained public support since the 2008 polls.

The PM has said BN must win back Selangor, a key state due to its industrial and natural resources "at all costs."

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