

**Not Impossible For Splinter Parties To Return To Umno's Fold**  
**Bernama**  
**Aug 12, 2012**  
**Oleh Fadzli Ramli**

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- Based on the current political scenario, it is hard for Umno splinter parties to return to the party like what happened to Semangat 46 (S46) in May 1996, but in politics anything is possible, say several political analysts.

One of them, Assoc Prof Datuk Zainal Abidin Borhan said the leadership factor played a crucial role in ensuring the return of the splinter parties to Umno's fold.

"This can be realised if all the party leaders can sit and discuss among themselves, but this is not easy because until today, there is still no response to the friendship extended to them by Umno.

"Yet, unity is possible. It all comes back to the leadership factor, like in the case of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad 'softening' Tengku Razaleigh and his S46," he told Bernama.

Last Thursday, Dr Mahathir called on the Malays, as well as Umno splinter parties, to unite and return to Umno, which he said, was the most appropriate party to unite the Malays and bring development to the people.

The history of Umno splinter parties began with the establishment of Parti Negara in 1954 by Datuk Onn Jaafar following disagreement over the issue of independence from Britain and the setting up of a multi-racial party.

S46 was formed by Tengku Razaleigh after Umno was declared illegal in 1988. Its struggle was to revive the old Umno which was banned after the presidential contest between Tengku Razaleigh and Tun Dr Mahathir in 1987.

Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR), originally named Parti Keadilan Nasional, was formed by Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail in 1999 following the imprisonment of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, also a former Umno deputy president, for improper conduct and over moral issues.

Another is Parti Kesejahteraan Insan Tanahair (KITA), which was formed from Parti Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia (Akim) by a former minister in the Prime Minister's Department and former Kota Bharu Umno division chief, Datuk Zaid Ibrahim, in 2010.

Zainal Abidin, also formerly director of the Academy of Malay Studies at Universiti Malaya, said party ideology also played an important factor in the unity process because Umno, PKR and PAS had their own ideology, though all were struggling for the Malays and Islam.

He said it would be easier to get the splinter parties to be component members of Barisan Nasional (BN), but that would not be the best solution as there would be problems to 'standardise' the parties' struggles and to bring together the members under a coalition.

"Members of these splinter parties comprise those who are unhappy with Umno, so if they don't really understand Umno's struggle and join BN as a component party, they might disrupt BN's struggle," he added.

Another political analyst, Assoc Prof Dr Sivamurugan Pandian said to ensure the return of the splinter parties to Umno's fold, Umno would have to win back the hearts of the young people, professionals and intellectuals who would be the "key" to their strength.

"Umno should open as wide an opportunity possible for these groups of people to join the party and to mobilise them to become the party's pulse by giving them important roles, like posts and responsibilities in decision making," he added.

The deputy dean of the Social Science Programme at Universiti Sains Malaysia, said the return of splinter parties to Umno's fold would be harder now as they were now seen stronger than before the 2008 general election.

"If Pakatan Rakyat is weak and cannot meet the people's aspirations, there is a possibility that PKR and PAS will return to Umno," he said.

Sivamurugan said that by getting the splinter parties to join as BN members, it would make BN stronger.

Umno Former Elected Representatives Association (PAKKU) president Tan Sri Adam Abdul Kadir said negotiations might get the splinter parties to return to Umno's fold.

"Some will gain and some will lose, but will there be a party willing to lose because all have their own principles and struggle. Only a strong level of compromise will make it happen," he said.

1Malaysia Foundation chairman Prof Dr Chandra Muzaffar said the Federal Constitution could be made a catalyst to unite the Malays under one party.

"It is hard to persuade these splinter parties because they all have their own interests and the leaders with their own respective history and so on," he said.

The former PKR deputy president said it was only normal for there to be the differences of opinions, but the differences should not be a platform to sow hatred and animosity among the people.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2012 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=687519>