

CM: No crisis in Sabah BN
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By RUBEN SARIO and RAHIMY ABD RAHIM

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah Barisan Nasional remains strong and intact despite the move by two of its MPs to align themselves with the Opposition, said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman.

He said the move by Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Lajim Ukin, the Beaufort MP and Tuaran MP Datuk Wildfred Bumburing to announce their support for Pakatan Rakyat was their decision.

"No, definitely not," said Musa, the Sabah Umno and Barisan Nasional chairman, when asked whether the state Barisan was facing a crisis after Lajim and Bumburing switched their political allegiance.

Sabah Barisan had anticipated their move and the close working relationship among the coalition's components remained, he said before breaking fast with United Sabah Islamic Association (Usia) officials here yesterday.

Musa said he had always extended the same support to Lajim as he had to all Barisan and Umno elected representatives.

"This includes support for all Lajim's programmes and activities. Perhaps he has his own agenda now," Musa added.

In Kuala Lumpur, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said the exit of two Sabah party leaders was part of politics.

"We will not take this lightly and we will strengthen our machinery to face the general elections," he said after launching the Seputeh Umno division meeting here yesterday.

When asked if the defection shows that Barisan has lost support in Sabah, Shafie denied the claims and said that Sabah would still become Barisan's 'fixed deposit' in the 13th general election.

Meanwhile, Beaufort Umno information chief Samin Ongki said the division was still intact and would give its support to Barisan and the state government.

Samin said the division's deputy chief, vice-chief, treasurer and most of the division members had not quit their posts, contrary to a claim by Lajim that 19 members of the division had quit with him.

"We are all standing firmly with Umno," he said, adding that the Wanita and Youth wings were also intact.

Lajim, who openly associated himself with Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on Saturday, did not quit the party or his Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister's post.

He said it was up to the party leadership to decide on his position.

Earlier yesterday, Bumburing, the Upko deputy president, after announcing his decision to leave Barisan, launched the non-political Sabah Reform Movement, which he said will work with Pakatan Rakyat.

Anwar, Lajim and Upko vice-president Senator Datuk Maijol Mahap were present.

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