

**Umno Must Not Sideline Middle-class Malays, Says Analyst**  
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**By Normalazwa Jamaludin**

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10 (Bernama) -- As it celebrates its 67th anniversary tomorrow, Umno must take new steps to ensure that it will stay relevant, especially in the aftermath of the 13th general election, according to a political analyst.

National Professors' Council politics, security and international affairs cluster chief Professor Datuk Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak said one of the most important steps that should be taken by Umno was to give extra focus on the aspirations and needs of the middle-class Malays.

For that, he said Umno should prepare a more inclusive framework for the group.

"Umno is close to the hearts of the people in rural areas and Umno still managed to defend rural seats in the 13th polls, but the number of middle-class Malays are increasing and they mustn't be sidelined by Umno.

"The aspirations and expectations of these middle-class Malays also differ from the aspirations and expectations of the rural community and other groups," he told Bernama here.

Hence, Mohamed Mustafa said Umno must have an interesting package to offer the group and efforts to reach out to the young people, especially the Y generation (Gen Y), must be intensified.

"If not, Umno rejuvenation process will be hampered because these two groups, the Gen Y below the age of 40 and the middle-class Malays, are very important," he said.

At the same time, he said Umno must also continue reaching out to other races, including the Chinese, so that it won't be seen as an unfriendly Malay party.

"Umno must find ways to maintain racial harmony in the country," he said.

The professor said as long as Umno continued to take good care of the Malays and the Bumiputeras in Sabah and Sarawak, uphold Islam, ensure justice and combat all forms of corruption, Umno would continue to get the people's support.

"Don't let Umno's image be smeared by corruption or as a party for the rich or for certain groups of Malays.

"Umno must take an inclusive stand and approach by protecting the interests of the Malays, Malay rulers and Islam, while at the same time be fair to all Malaysians. That way, Umno will continue to be appreciated," he added.

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