

Umno rebels under investigations for sabotage, results next week
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 18 – Umno has cast its eye inwards to weed out troublemakers within the party that had wrecked its candidates' campaign for the May 5 polls, and the results of its investigations are expected to be known by next week.

The ruling Malay party had sacked 61 party members nationwide who had run as independents on April 22 for sabotage.

Acting chairman of the Special Committee of the Umno Disciplinary Board, Tan Sri Megat Najmuddin Megat Khas said whatever decision or punishment taken against the saboteur would be known by next week.

"The Disciplinary Board received 11 reports of sabotage and we have directed the investigators to investigate carefully so that we can make a fair decision without abusing anyone," he was quoted as saying today by state news wire Bernama.

Umno had set up a special committee comprising four Umno Supreme Council members and four members of the Umno Disciplinary Board to speed up the process of decision-making and punishment against those found guilty of sabotage or breaching party discipline after getting complaints on April 18.

According to Megat, the alleged acts of sabotage included campaigning for the opposition, inciting other Umno members and refusing to open the Barisan Nasional's (BN) election operations room.

Among those in the list are Wanita deputy chief Datuk Kamilia Ibrahim and former supreme council member Datuk Seri Mohd Shariff Omar who named themselves as independent candidates for the Kuala Kangsar and Tasek Gelugor parliamentary seats on Nomination Day.

In an immediate response, two former Umno leaders, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and Datuk Tamrin Ghafar, urged the 61 sacked members to back the opposition in the May 5 general election.

The duo, now PAS members, claimed the removal of the Umno members from the Election 2013 line-up reflected the Malay party's entrenched patronage culture despite its attempt to project a reformist image.

"We are convinced that there is no future in Umno. With the existing pattern and political approach, Umno is left behind in the national and global wave of change.

"The move by the 61 Umno members to contest as independents proves this. We are convinced that you all are part of those who dare to say no to Umno's top leadership," said the two in a joint statement.

BN had fielded a crop of new faces to contest its toughest election to date, dropping several ministers including Datuk Seri Rais Yatim, Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen and Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop in the most radical move in 30 years since former Prime Minister Tun Dr

Mahathir Mohamad fought for his first mandate in 1982.

Internal sabotage had been one of the major contributing factors to BN's record losses in the 2008 general election.

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