

A big "no" from Umno to Anwar's dialogue offer
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If it was left to Umno supreme council members, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's invitation for a dialogue between Pakatan Rakyat and Barisan Nasional on issues plaguing the country would be rebuffed outright.

The Malaysian Insider understands that most supreme council members rejected the opposition leader's olive branch to discuss pressing issues affecting the country after Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak brought up the matter for discussion at its meeting last Friday.

The majority of the supreme council members said Anwar was "desperate" and "could not be trusted".

An Umno supreme council member, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Malaysian Insider that it was the prime minister who brought up Anwar's proposal at the start of the meeting.

"Quite a number of those present were against the idea. Most thought that Anwar is desperate and wants to still remain relevant after losing the election petitions," said the source.

Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz and Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam were especially sceptical of Anwar's offer for a dialogue.

They accused Anwar of being dishonest and noted that the only reason for his offer to dialogue was because he is fighting for relevancy, especially since the opposition parties' election petitions have been rejected by the courts.

"There were, however, others like Datuk Dr Awang Adek Hussin and Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah who held more moderate views," said the source.

Awang pointed out that Malays wanted to see unity, while Saifuddin said the council should respond to the offer strategically, especially since Najib had talked about national reconciliation post GE-13.

The prime minister, said the source, simply listened without giving his views.

Anwar organised a series of rallies dubbed Black 505 following the election to protest the results of the May 5 polls.

"Notwithstanding our strong protests about the validity of the outcome of the last elections, we are prepared to put aside our differences for the sake of the nation," he had said.

"We believe that it is imperative for the prime minister to convene without the slightest delay a round-table meeting between the BN government and Pakatan Rakyat in order to deliberate on the issues raised and formulate a comprehensive solution."

Anwar, in his Merdeka Day speech, also pushed for a quick meeting between both parties to

solve various issues plaguing the country.

"The meeting between both sides must be held immediately to save Malaysia," he had said.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein confirmed the supreme council had come to a consensus on the matter but left it to Najib to announce it. - September 2, 2013.

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