

**Why now, sceptical Umno leaders question Anwar on offer to talk**  
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**BY JENNIFER GOMEZ**

Umno Supreme Council members have described Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's offer to open a dialogue with Putrajaya as an act of desperation.

"He wants to talk about this now, after losing in the elections and losing in court on election petitions. To me, he has no credibility to make this offer now. He should just bring this up in Parliament if he is really serious," Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said today.

He added that the BN government was conciliatory after the general election, but Anwar made all sort of accusations against it.

"But after losing in the election petitions, he is making this offer. We cannot accept this," Mukhriz, the Kedah Menteri Besar, said after the Umno Supreme Council meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

The opposition leader organised a series of rallies dubbed Black 505 following the election to protest the results of the general election.

The opposition parties' election petitions in court, meanwhile, have met with failure.

Anwar had signalled his readiness to meet Putrajaya over several issues for the sake of the nation's well-being and future.

"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 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," he had said.

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, especially in light of the country's 56th birthday tomorrow," he had said.

Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin had earlier questioned Anwar's motive in wanting such a dialogue now, especially when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had mooted the idea soon after the 13th general election.

"The prime minister had offered to have a dialogue with them but they were not interested and petitioned the election courts over the outcome of the polls.

"But now when the courts rejected their petitions they want to have a dialogue," he said.

Puteri chief Datuk Rosnah Abdul Rashid agreed with Mukhriz in that Anwar should raise the issue in Parliament.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein confirmed that the Supreme Council meeting discussed the opposition leader's offer to discuss pressing issues affecting the country.

He said that although a consensus was reached on the matter, it was the prerogative of the Umno president, Najib, to announce it.

Najib had left the Supreme Council meeting before that, as he was rushing off to Malacca for the national Hari Raya open house tonight.

"We reached a collective decision on the matter but it is not for me to announce," Hishammuddin said.

He added, however, the call by Anwar was not a sensational issue.

"It's not something we want to make a big hue and cry about. The country will still be around tomorrow," Hishammuddin said.

He also questioned if the other leaders in Pakatan Rakyat agreed with Anwar's call for dialogue with BN. - August 30, 2013.

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