

Umno Election: To Restrict Or Not To Restrict MBs And CMs?

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- With the Umno election drawing nearer many views and opinions are being bandied about under the purported label of achieving the 'transformation' of the Malay party.

A proposal which keeps cropping up is that the menteri besar (MB) and chief ministers (CM) should not contest for Supreme Council posts at the party election in October.

There is a split in this approach however, with its proponents saying it would provide space for more new candidates while the detractors feel there should not be any restrictions in the spirit of equality which Umno is stressing upon this time.

Cheras Umno chief Datuk Seri Syed Ali Alhabshee said there is a need for new leaders in order to form the line of succession.

"I feel that long serving MBs, CMs and leaders should not offer to contest anymore. Give the new faces a chance because we need them to help the President transform the party," he said when contacted by Bernama.

Clarifying the position of MBs and CMs in the Supreme Council, Negeri Sembilan MB Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said they were not automatically appointed to the council.

Mohamad was quoted in a news portal recently stating that those who were not council members or appointed members, only attended the Supreme Council meeting under the category of "also present".

Those categorised as "also present" cannot speak except with the President's permission and are not allowed to vote.

The Menteri Besars in this list are Mohamad Hasan, (Perak) Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, (Terengganu) Datuk Seri Ahmad Said, (Johor) Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, (Kedah) Datuk Mukhriz Tun Dr Mahathir and (Perlis) Azlan Man.

So far only Mohamad and Azlan have offered to contest for a council position, while Mohamed Khaled, Zambry, Ahmad Said and Pahang MB Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob have decided not to contest.

There are strong rumours going around about Mukhriz and Musa planning to contest for the vice-presidency seats which are held by Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Datuk Seri Hishamuddin Tun Hussein and Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal.

Johor Baharu member of parliament Tan Sri Shahrir Abdul Samad prefers an open attitude and says: "Its' not a problem, anyone can offer to contest. Giving room to the younger generations doesn't mean others should be restricted."

Universiti Malaya politics lecturer Dr Sulastry Ahmad, who feels that there are pros and cons in the situation, says it is good to give way to new candidates, particularly the younger

generation.

But he fears that restrictions may cause a split at the grass roots level if the leaders of their choice are not allowed to contest.

"Perhaps if the MBs and CMs themselves make a stand not to contest, that could be a demonstration that Umno is really prepared to change. The Supreme Council needs to have some variations," he stressed.

Dr Sulastry however does not discount the possibility that the proposal was raised with aim to restrict certain MBs or CMs from contesting at the highest level of the party leadership.

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