

**Umno seeking BN parties' approval before talks with Pakatan  
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**BY YISWAREE PALANSAMY**

The much publicised national reconciliation talks between Barisan Nasional (BN) and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) will not be taking off anytime soon as Umno said it still had to get the greenlight from its allies.

"We are going to have our first meeting and we need to engage the other parties in this effort as well," said Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor (pic), adding that as only Umno has so far agreed to the talks.

"We are BN, and we work on a consensus basis as a multi-racial party, so we need to include the rest in it," Tengku Adnan told The Malaysian Insider recently after attending a religious forum in Kuala Lumpur.

The Federal Territories Minister has been appointed to liaise with the opposition pact on the matter.

Last month, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said he would discuss the suggestion by opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for a national consensus between both coalitions amid religious and racial tension.

"We have not seen this building up of tension since the events leading up to our national tragedy of May 13, 1969," Anwar said, in calling for a dialogue.

In response, Najib said that while Putrajaya was open to such talks to promote national reconciliation, it was against any sort of unity government with PR, pointing out that the BN received a "strong mandate" in the May 2013 polls.

"I had mooted this idea following the general election but various parties were not conducive to my appeal to come together. The legitimacy of the elections were even questioned by them and it was proven to be baseless.

"I am now heartened to see that the opposition is calling for a consensus and I am sure that they will welcome this new development," said Najib.

Tengku Adnan said once BN coalition members agree to the talks, he will contact PR to fix a date.

However, according to PR sources, even if the BN supreme council gave its green light, the talks may not begin anytime soon as both sides were currently preoccupied with the Kajang by-election, which will be held on March 23. – February 10, 2014.

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