

## **Dompok Confirms Resigning As Upko President on March 21**

**Bernama**

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KOTA KINABALU, March 5 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Bernard Dompok on Wednesday announced his resignation, effective March 21, as the president of the United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) he had helmed for 20 years.

The 64-year-old Dompok said the time had come for him to step down and let a new individual with fresh ideas to helm the party in a changing national political landscape.

"I have given my decision to step down a lot of thought, and (engaged in) soul searching. It is not an easy decision for me as party members continue to ask me to stay on. But I am convinced that the time has come for me to pass the baton to the next echelon of leadership," he said at Nabal Puru Lodge in Putaton, Penampang, here.

He said Upko deputy president Datuk Wilfred Madius Tangau would become the acting president following his resignation, as provided for in the party constitution.

Dompok, who had served as the minister of plantation industries and commodities up to May last year, said he had told party members numerous times that a president should not overstay his welcome as this could undermine the party's growth.

Dompok said a change in the party leadership would allow for a transformation through the injection of new ideas.

He advised all Upko leaders and members to give their full support to Tangau, 56, just as they had given their support to him up to now.

He said Tangau was ready to lead Upko as he had all the qualities demanded of him by Upko to carry on the party's work and struggle.

Dompok said that under his (Dompok's) leadership, the party had come up with various ideas to resolve the problems associated with Sabah, including the issue of the illegal immigrants which led to the setting up of the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on Illegal Immigrants in Sabah.

The RCI has since conducted its investigation, and a report is pending.

He said Upko had been vocal in expressing the need for development in Sabah, including economic, educational and religious development, and that such appeals were made to the displeasure of

certain quarters at times.

Dompok said the party also played a role in the issue over the use of the word 'Allah' by Christians through the 10-point solution agreed to by the Cabinet that allowed Christians in Sabah and Sarawak to use the word in their religious events.

Dompok expressed his thanks to all Upko leaders and members for their support that he said enabled him to discharge his duties well as the party president.

He also thanked the people in the state and parliamentary constituencies where he had been the elected representative for their support as well.

Dompok stood for elected office in 1986 and became the elected representative for the Moyog state constituency and the Penampang parliamentary constituency.

He defended the two seats in the 1990 elections.

Dompok became active in politics during the rule of Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) in 1985 and was appointed Sabah's finance minister the following year.

In 1998, he became the chief minister of Sabah in the Barisan Nasional-led state government under a rotation system for the post of chief minister.

Upko, which was previously known as Parti Demokrat Sabah (PDS), is a component party of the Sabah Barisan Nasional. It was founded by Dompok and several other leaders who left PBS after the state elections in 1994.

Asked for his plans, Dompok said he would be involved in the work of several non-governmental organisations and actively support Upko's activities.

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