

Muhyiddin's sacking a sign that Najib must go, says ex-Puteri exco
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The dismissal of Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin from Cabinet over the prime minister's handling of debt-ridden 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) was the last straw for a former Puteri Umno exco in refraining from calling for Datuk Seri Najib Razak's resignation.

Haziqah Nasirah Zol Bahari, who resigned as the wing's exco in January over differences with Najib's leadership, now feels that the Umno president's time is really up as he no longer listened to the people.

Muhyiddin's sacking in the cabinet reshuffle on July 28 was proof that Najib failed to heed calls by Malaysians who wanted him to step down and this caused a split in Umno, she said.

"The removal of Muhyiddin is the time for us to say no to Najib," she said.

"Muhyiddin's sacking is another reason why they (Umno people) don't dare to speak out.

"The lack of courage among Umno members because of loyalty and respect for the leaders makes them less critical... meaning whatever the leaders do, they would just respect," Haziqah said in a recent interview.

Muhyiddin was dropped as deputy prime minister and education minister after questioning Najib's brainchild, state investment firm 1MDB. The cabinet reshuffle also temporarily shut down a probe into 1MDB by the Public Accounts Committee when four of the panel's members were promoted into the cabinet.

Najib also changed the attorney-general, who was part of a task force investigating alleged wrongdoing in 1MDB and the flow of funds into the prime minister's personal accounts.

Haziqah, who remains an Umno member, said blind loyalty and obedience towards party leadership without questioning their actions could cause the downfall of the party.

"We need to have those in the front lines who dare make the grassroots think. And that's what lacking in Umno."

She said Najib's resignation would benefit the country, and added that it would do some good to Umno as the trust towards the party could be restored.

"He said he received the support of the three million Umno members. I am also an Umno member, but I don't back him," she said in reference to Najib's statement recently that three million Umno members were behind him.

"And now it is not just about his leadership as prime minister and Umno president, but also the direction of this country. Economic instability is related to political instability."

Haziqah has previously worked with a human rights organisation and socio-political blog LoyarBurok.

She said there were leaders in the party who had integrity, but they didn't have the courage to come forward and speak out.

"It's not that we should not be loyal, but (we) must also be critical. Blind loyalty can kill Umno and obedience towards party makes members blind to leaders' wrongdoings," she said.

She said she resigned as an exco of the young women's wing in January because she had lost faith in Najib's leadership and his alleged involvement in financial scandals.

She said Umno grassroots needed to stand up to their leaders if they wanted changes in the system.

"There are too many weaknesses, like BR1M. I am from the grassroots level and I work with the hardcore poor and I can see problems in the handing out of BR1M. Why do Umno members and the leadership have to follow this?" she said, referring to the 1Malaysia People's Aid in its Malay abbreviation.

Haziqah said she felt Umno had become an exclusive and elitist party, and she could no longer accept its use of Malay supremacy rhetoric.

She said these were real problems for the party, and felt saddened that other members labelled her "kurang ajar" (rude) when she pointed out these issues and urged Najib to step down. – August 11, 2015.

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