

Brewing discontent in Umno threatens to delay supreme council meeting again

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By Md Izwan

All signs point to another postponement of the Umno supreme council meeting scheduled for August 28, as the Malay ruling party struggles to contain the internal storm that is brewing in the wake of last month's Cabinet reshuffle.

Sources told The Malaysian Insider that Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor had yet to announce whether the meeting would go on.

"The meeting is in the secretary-general's schedule, but he has yet to decide whether to call for it or not," a party source told The Malaysian Insider.

Pressure as well as discontent among party grassroots over the Cabinet reshuffle – which saw Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal stripped of their government posts – are some of the reasons Tengku Adnan is hesitating to call for a meeting.

"Since the Cabinet was reshuffled, there have been no signs that the conflict within the party will abate. On the contrary, it's worsened.

"You can see how heated the division and wing meetings have become, and it doesn't seem like the grassroots will ever stop criticising the president," said the source, referring to party president Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

This could be the second time in a row the top leaders of the country's most powerful party postpones its meeting. The council was to decide Muhyiddin and Shafie's fate in the party at its July 29 meeting, but it was called off at the 11th hour.

Najib dropped the two leaders from his Cabinet after they had openly voiced their criticism over his handling of the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal.

When met on Monday, Tengku Adnan told The Malaysian Insider that he had yet to decide whether the August 28 meeting would go on.

"Wait, I will make a statement," he had briefly said.

Shafie's officer told The Malaysian Insider that he had yet to receive any notice regarding the August 28 meeting.

But delaying the meeting will soon no longer be an option, as Umno's constitution states that the supreme council must convene once every two months, or when a president calls for it, or when two-thirds of the council pen a request for the meeting to be held.

"If the secretary-general does not call for a meeting in accordance with Article 9.13.2 within 14 days of the request being made, then the members who made the request can call for a meeting on the condition that all supreme council members are invited.

"The meeting can be carried out if at least one-third of the supreme council members are in attendance," sources said. – August 13, 2015.

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