

Najib more tolerant of dissent than Dr Mahathir, says Umno info chief

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New Umno information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa praised his boss for removing three of the party's senior leaders from their posts, saying that Datuk Seri Najib Razak has been very tolerant of dissent.

In an interview with The Sunday Star, when asked to comment on the removal of Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal and Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir over their dissenting views, Annuar said the trio should have in fact been removed earlier.

"They should be removed... In fact, I think they should have been removed earlier! They know that!"

He said when Umno was deregistered in 1988 and Umno (Baru) was open to new members, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad also made it clear that he did not want Datuk Harun Idris as a member.

"Meaning that Dr Mahathir couldn't tolerate certain people because to him those people are not disciplined."

Annuar also said that since the posts of deputy prime minister and menteri besar were appointed, those who took on the roles served at the pleasure of the party president and as such, must observe a certain degree of discipline.

"What do you expect if the deputy prime minister or menteri besar starts going around and hammering the leadership in public?"

"I think Najib has been too tolerant."

Annuar also said he would like to see the leadership being firmer on discipline.

He added that when Muhyiddin criticised Najib several times, some of the senior leaders in Umno, including himself, talked about it and decided to tolerate it.

"With junior party members, we would take action swiftly.

"But with the deputy party president, we spared him.

"We gave him the benefit of the doubt.

"But when he continued to do it, it is not fair to the president to have a deputy who is not helping him."

Annuar also commented that compared with his time under Dr Mahathir, Najib was the more liberal one.

He also labelled Dr Mahathir as being a "thorn in the flesh" for a long time, starting from the time of Tun Dr Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, but added that no one acted against him.

"I think Umno has been very tolerant as far as Dr Mahathir is concerned.

"When Dr Mahathir attended the Nothing2Hide function, which was supposed to be attended by the prime minister, I was there.

"I listened to what was uttered by Dr Mahathir.

"It was very damaging to the party and far from the truth, but we just tolerated it.

"To say the party does not accept dissenting voice is not true. You can say anything but of course there must be limits." – February 14, 2016.

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