

**Dr Mahathir like a coma patient waiting for his time, says Ismail Sabri
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By Ng Ai Fern**

Saying he was not surprised by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision to quit Umno, a member of the party's Supreme Council today likened the former prime minister to a coma patient waiting for death.

"Many of us expect this. Statements made by Mahathir before this show his disagreement with the leaders today. We know this would happen sooner or later.

"We are not shocked, just like sick coma patients suddenly pass away, it is expected, just a matter of time," Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob told reporters in Kuching after presenting excellence service certificates to some 200 staff of his ministry.

The rural and regional development minister said Dr Mahathir's exit carried little weight even though he was once Umno's president and a former prime minister.

"We have three million members. I believe the effect is not that big to divide Umno," he added.

Dr Mahathir announced his decision to quit the country's biggest Malay party, saying Umno was now only interested to keep Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in power.

This is the second time Dr Mahathir quit Umno, the first in May 2008, over his unhappiness with then prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, following Barisan Nasional's losses in the general election that year.

Ismail said when Dr Mahathir quit the party in 2008, Umno was not divided but continued to win in the general election in 2013 to form government.

"What is important is that existing Umno leaders and members continue the sole objective of the party on the struggles of Malays and Bumiputeras," he said.

He said people joining and quitting Umno was normal because it was a democratic party.

"Many leaders have quit, Umno's first president Datuk Onn Jafar also quit, but Umno continues to be strong until today." – March 1, 2016.

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