

## **Shafie Apdal won't rejoin Umno, says Junz Wong**

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**By Zam Yusa**

### **The Warisan vice-president insists party president Shafie's struggle for Sabah is sincere and talk of him rejoining Umno is only propaganda.**

KOTA KINABALU: Parti Warisan Sabah vice-president Junz Wong has dispelled speculation that its president Shafie Apdal will rejoin Umno if the party captures the Sabah state government in the coming general election.

Shafie was sacked from the federal cabinet in July 2015 and quit Umno in July 2016 to form Warisan.

The Semporna MP said he chose a Sabah-centric platform rather than joining PPBM, the peninsula-based party formed by sacked deputy prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin and former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Warisan was unveiled last October after Shafie took over an existing party and renamed it. He was joined immediately by several leaders from other opposition parties, including Penampang MP Darell Leiking of PKR and Wong who was the DAP assemblyman for Likas.

However, Shafie has been dogged by speculation he would return to his old party Umno, in which he was a vice-president, if Warisan takes over the state government.

"Our party president was offered a position in PPBM. If he had accepted it, he would most likely have been given a place at the top of PPBM's leadership, from which Shafie would stand a good chance of getting appointed as deputy prime minister if PPBM wins the next election," said Wong today.

"But Shafie rejected the offer because he felt it was time to go back to Sabah and be the much-needed local person to fight for the rights of Sabahans," Wong said during a ceremony to mark the first anniversary of Shafie's departure from Umno.

"Shafie was already the third or fourth most powerful man in Umno and held a full federal cabinet portfolio but he was willing to put these aside because of his integrity," Wong said.

"If he had joined PPBM, perhaps as a vice-president, and then worked with the DAP and PKR, they could have established a strong presence.

“Shafie has a strong base in the east coast while DAP and PKR are influential in their respective areas.

“But in the end, Shafie is determined that he will fight for Sabah through a Sabah-centric party and will remain in this struggle.”

Wong likened Shafie’s steadfastness to that of PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim who was sacked from Umno.

“Anwar never rejoined Umno. All this talk about Shafie rejoining his old party is only propaganda by Umno and the ruling coalition.”

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