

UMNO's Entrance To Sabah A Responsible Decision, Says Abdul Rahim

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KOTA KINABALU, Feb 21 (Bernama) -- A senior Sabah UMNO leader said Sabahans made the right decision to accommodate the Peninsular-based political party into Sabah in order to solve the political quagmire besieging the state in the early nineties.

"I don't think there was any regret (in the decision), neither a setback to the people and the state," said Papar UMNO Chief, Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Ismail.

"In all fairness, it was a right and responsible decision. What we are seeing in Sabah for the last 26 years is a far cry from what was happening in the state before then. To put the record straight, UMNO was invited to spread its wing to Sabah.

"Furthermore, Sabah was embroiled in political squabbling created by some forces known to the people of Sabah.

"Although Berjaya, United Sabah National Organisation (Usno) and Party Bersatu Sabah (PBS) were accepted as part of the federal government, but at the state level political bickering among the local political parties were difficult to control," Abdul Rahim who is also Pantai Manis Assemblyman told Bernama.

"The present situation is a far cry from what was happening before UMNO entered Sabah and eventually became the backbone of the State Barisan Nasional (BN) government.

"As we can see, Sabahans are now enjoying continuous political stability and economic progress by leaps and bound, not to mention the close working relationship between the State and Federal leaders.

"This conducive situation has brought about tremendous economic spin-off to Sabah, particularly in terms of receiving significant federal funding," he added.

Rahim, who was one of the UMNO pro tem committee for the incoming UMNO in 1991, said it was improper to question the UMNO Sabah founding leaders who are still holding political position.

"To be fair, many of them were holding senior government posts at that time but they willingly joined politics through UMNO.

"What I'm saying is, these 'badan penaja UMNO Sabah' (pro tem committee) are the pillars of UMNO's foray into Sabah.

"Rather than questioning their presence, they should instead be welcomed as long as they have the capacity to serve the party. I don't think they were doing it for self-interest after what they have sacrificed," he said.

Among the UMNO Sabah pro tem committee members are Tun Datu Mustapha Datu Harun,

Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Ismail, Datuk Juslie Ajirol, Datuk Ampong Puyon, Tun Dr Juhar Mahiruddin (now Yang Dipertua Negeri Sabah), Datuk Seri Yahya Ag Hussin, Datuk Osu Sukam, Datuk Dr Yusof Yacob, Haji Karim Ghani, Datuk Dr Kassim Kamidin and Tun Sakaran Dandai.

Rahim said, Sabah Chief Minister, Tan Sri Musa Aman, being the first UMNO Sabah Treasurer, also played vital roles in realizing UMNO's struggle in Sabah.

UMNO Sabah under Musa's leadership has achieved tremendous upsurge to the extent that Sabah is well-known as 'fixed-deposit'.

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