

'Resign or face the sack'

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SABAK BERNAM: Nov 8 will be D-day for Datuk Zakaria Mat Deros.

The Port Klang State Assemblyman has to resign as a Klang municipal councillor by then or be dropped by the state government.

This is Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo's ultimatum to the embattled Klang Umno division chief who built a luxury mansion without official approval.

Zakaria will have to submit his resignation to the state government and Klang Municipal Council president Abdul Bakir Zin.

"If he relinquishes his post, it would show that he is still a responsible person.

"It would also mean that he realises his many mistakes and can still maintain his good name and that of the party," he told reporters at his Hari Raya

open house at Simpang Lima, Sungai Besar, here yesterday.

Zakaria's impending departure from the council would not affect his standing as a state assemblyman and Umno division chief, he added.

Dr Khir said Nov 8 was the deadline for Zakaria to quit as it was the day on which the state executive council would meet.

Zakaria found himself in the soup after it was discovered that he had not obtained council approval for the four-storey "Istana Zakaria" in Kampung Idaman, Pandamaran, Klang.

On why the controversy would not affect Zakaria's position in Umno, Dr Khir said this was because it was a civil matter.

"Umno can take action (against party leaders) if the issue involves criminal breach of trust, imprisonment or a crime," he said.

On his personal view of Zakaria, Dr Khir said he saw him as an older

person whom he respected.

"Everyone makes mistakes — some make them in their youth, some in middle age and some in their twilight years.

"But everyone should be given a chance to mend their ways. It is not fair if we do not give Zakaria a chance."

Dr Khir said he had an audience with Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah before deciding to ask Zakaria to step down.

Asked if Zakaria could appeal against the decision, Dr Khir said: "For the time being, he should resign."

He said the position would be left vacant for the moment.

Zakaria's position in the council was complicated by the fact that his son, Zainuri, and daughter-in-law, Roselinda Abdul Jamil, had also been nominated as councillors.

Dr Khir said the state government had decided to allow only two members from a family to sit on a municipal council to prevent a recurrence of the

problem.

On councillors with outstanding problems like Zakaria, he said the state government had decided to give them a two-month grace period to resolve the issues.

He said they would be dropped if they could not resolve their problems during that period.

On complaints that Zakaria was rude and arrogant, Dr Khir said he would look into the matter.

"I do not want any leader in Selangor to have this sort of attitude.

"But I will investigate these complaints against Zakaria although I feel that it could just be his style of talking that has put some people off," he said.

Sultan Sharafuddin, during his meeting with Zakaria, had also told him that he could be stripped of his Datukship if he did not mend his ways.

"I hope that Zakaria will heed the Sultan's advice," Dr Khir added.