

# Abdullah: Help fight graft

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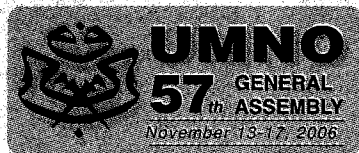
HELP fight money politics and corruption in Umno. And come forward if you have the evidence, appealed Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Umno president said he was serious about wanting to rid the party of the scourge but he could not do it alone.

"I have asked each and every one of you to help me to get rid of money politics in Umno.

"We want leaders for their ability to serve, not for their ability to buy support.

"You have the power to send a clear



and resounding message. Be with me to clean our party of the scourge of money politics," he said when opening the Umno general assembly yesterday.

Abdullah said people were saying that corruption was rampant but the majority of these views were based on hearsay.

"When we ask for proof, none is forthcoming," he said.

The process of arresting and prosecuting was not easy and the process of investigation, proving corruption and getting witnesses was very difficult, he said.

"There is no point in prosecuting large numbers if we do not have enough evidence to convict them," he said.

Abdullah, who is Prime Minister, said he wanted to fight corruption at all levels of government.

"Without integrity, a country cannot

be deemed to be successful in the real sense," he said.

He said he had called on the courts to speed up corruption cases as it was in the national interest.

Sometimes, the fight against corruption was frustrating, he said.

"There is a perception that I am slowing down in the fight against corruption, that no action is being taken.

"That does not mean that I am not monitoring. This is a long and ongoing process," he said.

Abdullah said enforcing the rule of law in a firm and transparent manner,

particularly in the fight against crime, was important.

"We cannot allow the occurrence of major crimes to create the perception that this country is no longer safe.

"The language of the law is the same for all citizens. No one is exempted from prosecution, no one is above the law.

"It would be a travesty and a subject of ridicule if the laws only applied to the weak and those without positions," he said and urged Umno leaders to be the first to display exemplary behaviour.