

Umno not likely to collapse, say Umno veterans

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno post-14th General Election (GE14) is much stronger and is not likely to collapse as claimed by some quarters.

Its Veterans' Club secretary-general, Datuk Mustapha Yaakub, said the party had returned to its roots when it was no longer in power.

He said party members had adjusted to Umno becoming an opposition party.

"With limited funds, the party has returned to its origins," he said.

Mustapha was responding to Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks that Umno would fall as many were leaving the 72-year-old party. This was because they no longer feared former Umno president Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Mustapha said Dr Mahathir made the remarks as he wanted Umno to be destroyed as it was part of his strategy to strengthen Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu), which was not as powerful as its other partners in Pakatan Harapan.

"Dr Mahathir is using the police and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) to threaten and pressure Umno leaders until some of them quit the party."

Mustapha said the move by certain leaders to leave the party did not necessarily mean that Umno members were leaving the party en masse.

"In fact, no branch had been dissolved. Dr Mahathir's claim is merely an ambition to 'steal' Umno leaders to strengthen Bersatu," he said.

Umno veteran Tan Sri Muhammad Muhd Taib acknowledged that the events of GE14 proved that leaders who did not perform their duties and those who abused their power would be rejected by the people.

The people, he said, had begun to use their voice.

"The history of the world has shown that nothing is forever.

"Just look at the Islamic empire in India which stood for nearly 100 years. They built the Taj Mahal and thousands of mosques.

But in the end, many of these did not survive the passage of time.

"If the current party leadership does not work hard to address the corruption issue, the people will no longer support the party. That's where the collapse of Umno will take place."

Political analysts believed that the departure of several Umno leaders, including some of its key personalities, signalled a crisis of confidence within the party, which might eventually trigger an exodus.

Universiti Malaya political analyst, Associate Professor Dr Awang Azman Awang Pawi, said the departure of several key Umno leaders had dealt a severe blow to the party's image.

This, he said, could in turn lead to a loss of confidence and direction among ordinary members.

"The people who left Umno had, when they were in the government, benefited from posts, power and titles.

"Now that Umno has lost and has become the opposition, many are looking at ways to leave as these benefits are no longer available," he said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Human Ecology Faculty senior lecturer, Associate Professor Dr Mohd Izani Mohd Zain, said Umno was facing a major leadership crisis.

The only way out for Umno, he said, was for the party to reinvigorate itself by restoring the basis of its struggle.

"Umno needs to prove that they can restore the basis of their struggle.

"If they fail to do this, what Dr Mahathir envisioned for the party will become a reality."

Umno, he said, has been hit badly by the departures of respected leaders such as its former supreme council member, Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, fondly known as Tok Pa. However, the party also has to bear the burden of leaders who have been previously linked to corruption cases.

"Umno needs to decide the direction it wants to take and convince its members. They should not waste time."



Datuk Mustapha Yaakub



Tan Sri Muhammad Muhd Taib