

# Term of UMS Chairman was cut short, VC not affected

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KOTA KINABALU: The services of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Chairman Tun Zaki Azmi was among those of five in various public universities that were cut short to July 31, sources told the Daily Express.

The other four affected were Univeristi Tun Hussein Onn's Tan Sri Sufri Mohd Zin, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin's Datuk Dr Kamaruddin Hussin, Universiti Sains Malaysia's Tan Sri Noorul Ainur Mohd Noor and Universiti Putra Malaysia's Tan Sri Anuwar Ali.

However, no Vice Chancellors were known to be similarly affected, thus far, by the move of the new Pakatan Harapan government. It was learnt that Zaki's term was initially supposed to stretch till the middle of next year.

Meanwhile, the removal of political appointees as top public university officials is a good sign for higher education reforms, said the Malaysian Academic Movement (Gerak). It said that it marked a positive move for joint attempts between the Education Ministry and academics to

improve the country's education system.

Gerak chairman Prof Zaharom Nain said the group would continue to support Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik's decisions. "Dr Maszlee's decisive actions show true commitment by a fellow academic-turned-politician whose concerns go beyond the colour of our children's shoes," said Prof Zaharom.

Gerak had submitted a memorandum to Dr Maszlee on June 11, calling for the appointments of vice-chancellors, their deputies and university boards and that of other top university administrators, to be based solely on merit and not politics.

Other proposals included a call to dissolve the National Professors Council, seen as political, and to do away with policies based on race and religion rather than promoting knowledge and ethical values.

The group also called on the Government to replace academics, who had been appointed because of their political links, with respected, independent-minded, analytical and accountable academicians.