

Sabah politicians' loyalties remain unseen, says UMS academician

By [Avila Geraldine](#) - June 14, 2020 @ 11:11am



A local political analyst defined the current political scenario in Sabah as being "between the devil and the deep blue sea". - NSTP file pic

KOTA KINABALU: A local political analyst defined the current political scenario in Sabah as being "between the devil and the deep blue sea".

With rumours of party swapping and the return of former chief minister Tan Sri Musa Aman, it remains to be seen where the loyalty of state assemblymen and members of Parliament lie.

Noting that "frogging" (switching parties) is common, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) academician Dr Lee Kuok Tiung said some elected representatives, especially those who won under the Barisan Nasional (BN) ticket in the 14th general election (GE14), might choose to re-join Musa if something major were to take place.

"However, it's still too early to assume anything. Musa has kept a very low profile for the past two years and so far he hasn't indicated anything, that he will make a comeback or play a different role in Sabah's politics.

"But as one of the most senior politicians in Sabah, I'm sure his comrades will refer to him for advice or persuade him to make a comeback," he opined following rumours of a possible change in government.

After Parti Warisan Sabah (Warisan) president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal took over the state government from Musa, the Sungai Sibuga assemblyman faced 46 corruption and money laundering charges linked to timber concession contracts in the state.

The Kuala Lumpur High Court had on June 9 acquitted and discharged Musa of all charges. He returned to the state on June 12, welcomed by several loyal supporters.

Lee believed the court decision has become a motivation for all Umno loyalists in the state and has given the party a new hope.

Asked whether Warisan's elected representative would betray Shafie following claims of attempts to pull MPs and assemblymen, the UMS senior lecturer said Shafie should lodge a report with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC).

He added as long as the anti-hopping law is not introduced, frogging or pinching elected representatives would remain a culture in Malaysian politics.

Lee then noted the Warisan-PH-Upko state government was also formed using the same method. Upko was a BN component party and several state Umno leaders had joined Warisan to support Shafie as the Chief Minister.

"Now they are suddenly plunged into a situation of power struggle - who should become the Prime Minister. I'm sure not all of them want to be stuck in this unpleasant situation, especially when the priority now is to combat Covid-19.

"At the federal level, it is uncertain with all the politicking from Pakatan Harapan (PH) that they have enough seats to take over from Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin. Anyway, credit should be given to Muhyiddin on how he handles the situation by putting the people first.

"This can be seen from how he, along with his team, are handling the Covid-19 pandemic. He didn't pay much attention on all the (political) rumours or respond to it but focuses on tackling people's issues.

"For Sabah, it's not impossible to see some of the elected representatives pledge their support to the Prime Minister. They might put aside their political differences and join him in tackling the people's problems," he said.

Yesterday, Warisan treasurer-general Terrence Siambun said the party is ready for possible snap polls to settle the current political turmoil in the country.

Siambun noted the solid co-operation and good understanding between Warisan, PH and Upko were the key to ensure victory against the resurrected Sabah Umno and Perikatan Nasional (PN).