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Mahathir-Vote

MAHATHIR DISAGREES WITH NO CONFIDENCE VOTE TO OUST BRANCH LEADERS

LANGKAWI, March 19 Mac (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamd said today he disagreed with the action taken by some Umno branches to oust their leaders through a no confidence vote.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said if this became the practice it would sooner or later destroy the party.

"I do not agree with any effort to topple leaders at the branch level through a no confidence vote because Umno has a disciplinary committee to which such matters can be referred," he added.

If Umno members, at whatever level, had a problem, they should refer it to the Supreme Council to resolve, he told a press conference at the end of a two-day visit to this duty-free island resort.

Dr Mahathir was asked about the action taken by the Rantau Panjang Umno division committee which adopted a no confidence motion against its head Mohd Zain Ismail at an emergency meeting two days ago.

The division's deputy head Rusdan Mustapha said the action was taken because Mohd Zain was alleged to have assisted an Independent candidate in the 1995 general election.

Dr Mahathir said the top Umno leadership was aware that it was sometimes required to sack its leaders and members but such action should only be taken on the basis of strong grounds and clear proof.

He added: "We know sometimes we must sack someone but it must be done because of a great "sin" like joining another party.

"But, it is not done this way (no confidence vote)."

He said if the Rantau Panjang Umno division committee had proof about what Mohd Zain did, it should lodge a complaint with the Supreme Council.

"We must show proof of the person's misdeed because it is very easy to make accusations. I too can accuse others of not liking me," he added.

On the brainstorming meeting organised by Kelantan Umno which he chaired, Dr Mahathir said the discussions focussed on political problems in the state.

The topic on seeking ways to ensure that Umno recapture the opposition-ruled state topped the agenda which included discussions on why Umno failed in the state.

"In general, we find that there has been a re-think on the part of the people of Kelantan to support Umno and Barisan Nasional (BN)," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who heads the Kelantan Umno liaison committee, said problems besetting certain divisions were also raised during the meeting which lasted about two hours.

The meeting was attended by Kelantan Umno liaison deputy head Datuk Annuar Musa, Jeli Member of Parliament Datuk Mustapa Mohamad and about 100 state Umno leaders from all levels.

Dr Mahathir said he also reminded Kelantan Umno, and all other state Umno, to give priority to discipline to ensure success for the party. --

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