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PM: He felt any report on him should not be linked to Umno

EXCERPTS from Dr Mahathir's Press conference on Muhammad's resignation:

Q: Datuk Seri, did the Supreme Council accept the resignation of Tan Sri Muhammad?

A: Yes, the Supreme Council accepted his resignation made of his own will, so that any investigation will not tarnish Umno's name.

It is up to the investigations to determine whether he is wrong or not. Only then Umno will evaluate his position in the party.

Q: When will the resignation take effect?

A: On Monday.

Q: Datuk Seri, Tan Sri Muhammad resigned before the case was proven against him?

A: Yes, he agreed to step down as he felt any report on him should not be linked to Umno.

Q: Datuk Seri, is this an admission of guilt?

A: I do not know whether this is an admission of guilt but it was his decision not to link (the investigations on him) with Umno. Any investigation is not an investigation of Umno ... but of him.

Q: Is the resignation related to the court case in Brisbane?

A: Any case.

Q: Who will take over during the interim period?

A: We have to find ... probably there are reporters who are suitable (for the post).

Q: Datuk Seri, why didn't Tan Sri Muhammad take leave pending the conclusion of his case. This was the option given to Tan Sri Rahim Tamby Chik (former Youth chief and Malacca Chief Minister)?

A: Tan Sri Rahim also had to quit.

Q: Was Tan Sri Muhammad's resignation due to the pressure from the Opposition (parties)?

A: Who cares about the Opposition ... as if we are not responsible. We do not wait for the Opposition (before taking action). If that is the case it is the Opposition which made Malaysia a success. In actual fact, it is (Lim) Kit Siang and Nik Aziz who are effective...we do not do anything.

Q: Is the decision by Tan Sri Muhammad to resign appropriate?

A: It is up to him as he has the right to make a decision.

Q: Was he advised to step down or did he make the decision on his own accord?

A: We debated the matter and upon hearing the views of members, he decided. Other people gave their views, he made the decision.

Q: Did the majority of Supreme Council want him to resign?

A: I did not say anything about that. I said other people (Supreme Council members) gave their views and it is up to him to make an evaluation (of their views).

Q: Datuk Seri, will the post of (Umno) vice-presidency be vacated (by Muhammad)?

A: He will tell (you) on Monday.

Q: Was the decision on Tan Sri Muhammad's party posts made during the meeting? Did the Supreme Council members want him to vacate the post?

A: Supreme Council members gave their views and Tan Sri Muhammad made his own decision.

Q: If Tan Sri Muhammad is not found guilty by the Brisbane court, will he be re-appointed?

A: If a person is innocent, how can we punish him?

Q: Datuk Seri, the Brisbane case is on his failure to declare RM2.4 million in cash. It is not corruption or things like that. So, if he is found guilty, is it proper to resign based on that (failing to declare) alone?

A: We will wait until the time comes, to procrastinate ... something yet to happen is difficult.

Q: But Tan Sri Muhammad is not charged on corruption but failure to declare the RM2.4 million?

A: That is the charge but it has an effect on the party...being charged also has an effect. We are concerned about the party and we feel he (Muhammad) is responsible...but it is his right to make a decision. Members should not smear Umno's name by doing something which casts negative aspersions on the party.

Q: When will you make the announcement of the new Menteri Besar and new Umno liaison chiefs for Federal Territory and Selangor?

A: I will discuss the matter.

Q: Tan Sri Muhammad has been Menteri Besar since 1986. How would you describe his performance?

A: There is no need to touch on this.

(END)