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People urged to fully support war against graft

PENANG, Sun. - The Government's move to crack down on corruption should be fully supported by all and not be turned into a controversial issue, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said it was only right that the people give their solid support to the Government on its firm stand to wipe out corrupt practices and take action against those involved.

"This is not an issue to be turned into a controversy.

"If action is needed against those involved, then it ought to be taken. There should not be any hesitation.

"We should also not feel bad and reluctant about it," he said.

Abdullah said the people, on the other hand, had a right to complain if the Government did not act against the corrupted.

"But when action is taken, then the people should give their utmost support to the Government," he said when opening the Kepala Batas Umno division delegates conference attended by more than 300 delegates at the Penang Golf Resort in Bertam.

Also present were State Legislative Assembly speaker Datuk Yahaya Hamid, who is also the Pinang Tunggal State Assemblyman, Penaga State Assemblyman Datuk Azhar Ibrahim and Bertam State Assemblyman Hilmi Abdul Rashid.

Abdullah, however, added that the Government would be careful and fair when acting against those found to be involved in corrupt practices.

"Fairness is important in this matter," he said.

Abdullah, who is Umno vice-president, also called on Umno members to fully support efforts to rid the party of money politics, corruption and abuse of power.

"We cannot compromise on such actions.

"It is a deadly disease which we must fight to the end. We cannot allow it to destroy the party and the Government," he said.

Abdullah said Umno members should heed the advice of party president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during a video-conference with acting party president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the party's supreme council meeting on Thursday where two former Wanita Exco members were suspended.

Dr Mahathir had said: "I thank and congratulate everyone for supporting the decision. Actually, I had discussed this with the Deputy Prime Minister and we had agreed on this approach.

"I hope the supreme council would support this and any future decision on this matter just as the Cabinet had done, although they may affect our friends.

"If we do not act maybe many of them would think that they would be defended no matter what they do, because we are in power.

"This is unhealthy for the party and the Government."

(END)