

# Barisan leaders back decision <sup>39</sup> to expel Anwar

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KUALA LUMPUR: The MCA said yesterday that it "supported and respected" the Umno supreme council's decision to expel Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from Umno.

"It is Umno's internal decision and it was unanimous. Out of Barisan Nasional solidarity, MCA supports and respects the decision," MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said.

Dr Ling, who convened an emergency MCA presidential council meeting yesterday, urged the "Barisan Nasional brothers and sisters to quickly put this episode behind us."

"There is still so much to do. We have to concentrate on reviving the economy.

"Umno needs to talk to its members to enable the healing process to occur," he said.

Dr Ling also said that the Cabinet worked as a team with no one being indispensable, saying "it is a team of people. If one is

missing, the rest will take over."

He said what was important was that everyone did his or her job well.

In Alor Star, MCA vice-president Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn expressed similar sentiments.

"We have confidence that the Prime Minister had studied the situation in detail and made the right decision."

Transport Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk Chor Chee Heung said: "We believe in the wisdom of Dr Mahathir in handling the matter."

"Since this case involved one of the highest leaders in the country and in view of the overwhelming evidence against Anwar, we leave it to the Prime Minister to decide what is best for the country," Chor, an Alor Star MP, said.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the unity of Barisan Nasional would not be affected by Anwar's expulsion from Umno.

"In every party, there are leaders who come and go. But the party and the relationship with other parties (in Barisan) remain.

"The ties are in the name of the party and not on personalities," he said.

In Johor Baru, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik expressed support for Dr Mahathir's action.

"We should support our Prime Minister's decision as I am sure he has made thorough studies and have gathered sufficient evidence against Anwar before taking such action," he said.