

Zahid: **Umno Youth**²⁵⁻ **supports** Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has reiterated the movement's support for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership but at the same time expressed his sympathy for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's family.

Breaking his silence over the movement's stand in the sacking of Anwar from the party, Zahid said his presence at Anwar's house was merely to show his sympathy to Anwar's family.

"It should not be viewed otherwise because Umno Youth's stand is clearly the one taken dur-

ing the Barisan Nasional Youth meeting (last Thursday)," Zahid said in a statement.

"I reiterate Umno Youth's stand that it is firmly behind the strong leadership of Dr Mahathir as Umno president and Prime Minister," he said.

However, Zahid did not state his stand nor that of the movement over the sacking of Anwar from the party.

Zahid also said that he was not ready to step down but was leaving his fate in the hands of members who had elected him during the annual dele-

gates conference in 1996.

"As far as my position is concerned, it is a post elected by the Umno Youth general assembly on Oct 9, 1996.

"Only the delegates can determine my position as I have been elected democratically," he said.

Zahid has come under pressure to state his stand since Anwar was sacked from Cabinet and expelled as party member, last week.

Zahid acknowledged that there were Youth members who were confused over his stand.

"I appreciate their opinions," he said.