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Anwar sacked from Umno after he refused to quit party post

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has been expelled from Umno. The party's supreme council took the decision after he refused to resign as deputy president.

Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the Press after chairing a four-and-a-half hour meeting that Anwar was given the opportunity to resign as deputy president and leave the party voluntarily.

Council members unanimously voted in favour of his expulsion.

They had earlier given their opinions and almost all of them felt that he should resign.

After all members had spoken, Anwar was given an opportunity to speak. When he did, he categorically stated that he was not willing to resign but would accept any decision by the supreme council.

Dr Mahathir then explained the situation affecting Anwar's position and asked the consensus of members.

They unanimously agreed that Anwar be expelled from the party.

All supreme council members, except vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who is in South Africa for the Non-Aligned Movement Conference, were present.

To show support for the decision, the members stayed back for the Press conference.

Asked why Anwar was sacked, the party president said he did not have to explain, adding that tonight's meeting only discussed Anwar's case.

Anwar, who left about 12.30am, spoke to a waiting crowd comprising members of the party, the Islamic Youth Movement Malaysia (Abim) and Malaysian Youth Council.

He told them Dr Mahathir had suggested that he (Anwar) be expelled from the party.

"I'm not guilty and I'm not prepared to step down from my position.

"They can expel me if they want... and I know that I'll be expelled if the president says so.

"They have shamed me, insulted me, and sentenced me by using the local media.

"I will fight to defend my principles and rights," he said.

Anwar then urged the crowd to be calm and not create any trouble, adding that he did not want to be held responsible for any untoward incident.

Some members of the large crowd were seen putting up banners and placards, and distributing pamphlets urging support for the former deputy Prime Minister.

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