

23/09/1998

Anwar supporters rapped for challenging the law

Rashid Yusof; Mimi Syed Yusof; P. Chandra Sagar  
KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Umno Youth deputy head Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein and 20 of its exco members today came out strongly against the behaviour of supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for breaking and challenging the law by staging illegal assemblies in the past few days.

Hishammuddin said they also viewed seriously the action of Anwar's supporters who had gone overboard in damaging properties at the premises of the Umno building (Menara Dato Onn where Umno headquarters is).

He said pictures and historical material long displayed at the Umno building had been damaged by young Malays, some of whom were members of the party.

This was against the customs and values of the Malays, showing that they were no longer rational in making decisions. This has really tested the patience of Umno Youth, he added.

"There is a limit to one's patience. If left unchecked, the country too will be ruined by this reckless act," he said, reading out a statement, at a Press conference at his Primary Industries Ministry office. Hishammuddin is its Deputy Minister.

Reaffirming its confidence in the enforcement agencies, the Umno Youth exco regretted the action of "certain parties" in using the Malay youths including students to further their personal agenda.

"We are not blaming the undergraduates," Hishammuddin said. "What is regrettable is that a few leaders had misled students into acting beyond the acceptable norm."

The 20 Youth exco exco Youth members also signed a memorandum urging the supreme council to take disciplinary action against its detained leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, assistant secretary Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and its Penang and Negeri Sembilan chiefs - Dr Abdul Rahim Ghouse and Ruslan Kassim - for going against the stand of the movement and their own concerning Anwar's reform movement.

The exco members, who signed the memorandum to be submitted to Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik tomorrow, were with Hishammuddin at the Press conference.

Hishammuddin said whether he would now be acting Youth chief, would have to be decided by the supreme council.

With Ahmad Zahid's absence, Hishammuddin said he and the other exco members would carry out the responsibilities of the movement.

"Mindful of Ahmad Zahid's stance not to give up the post, my exco colleagues and I feel it will be irresponsible to leave the Umno Youth without any clear direction.

"We will continue to carry out the tasks and administration until the supreme council decides on Ahmad Zahid's position."

Making it clear that Umno Youth would go all out in fighting the reform movement, Hishammuddin urged Umno Youth members to remain calm over the arrest of Ahmad Zahid.

He said the movement would now work harder together with the party leadership led by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to explain the actual situation to the people.

The movement would also gauge the sentiment and views of the members, take measures to unite the movement and to have a meeting with the leadership to hear for themselves the explanation by Dr Mahathir.

In Gopeng, Perak Menteri Besar and State Umno liaison committee chairman

Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said it would direct division and branch leaders to hold dialogues with grass root members to explain the decision taken by the party's supreme council to expel Anwar.

He was speaking at a gathering hosted by Gopeng and Kampar Umno divisions.

At another function in Kampar, Ramli said Zahid was well aware of the consequences and action to be taken against him due to his association with Anwar.

"He knows what he was doing which was in breach of party discipline and Ahmad Zahid was prepared to face the music including expulsion from the party.

"The Youth chief will then blame the supreme council for such actions calling them unjust and unfair," he said told newsman after visiting Syarikat Pico Lite Electrical Sdn Bhd here today.

(END)