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Anwar-Sabbaruddin

ANWAR'S DISMISSAL WILL NOT AFFECT UMNO - SABBARUDDIN

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- The removal of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister will not adversely affect the party, party secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said today.

He was confident that Umno members supported the decision by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to dismiss Anwar from the posts.

Asked whether the latest development in Umno would have an impact on the party, he said, "Umno had gone through such situations. Under Dr Mahathir's leadership Datuk Musa (Hitam) resigned and there was not much problems. After that bigger problems arose when Tengku Razaleigh and his supporters left Umno to form Semangat 46. As we know, it is now history as all of them have returned to Umno's fold."

"This may be yet another phase, I'm confident we can resolve this without much problems," he told a media conference on the 1998 shopping carnival.

"Dr Mahathir acted in his capacity as Prime Minister. As prime minister, he has the right to appoint and dismiss anybody from deputy prime minister, deputy ministers, ministers to political secretaries," said Sabbaruddin, who is Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister.

"He has been removed only from his government posts, his party post is another story," he said.

He said he believed that Dr Mahathir made the decision after a deep thought and thorough discussions.

"We know a prime minister will not take hasty actions particularly Dr Mahathir," he said.

Asked whether there were opposing views among party members over Anwar's removal, Sabbaruddin said, "to say there is total support, its hard to say but what I was told nobody voiced their disapproval, those whom I met gave positive reactions."

"Whatever action taken and however correct the action may be, it will be impossible for all the 2.7 million party members to agree to the decision," he said.

Asked whether Anwar's dismissal was ever discussed at the supreme council meeting, he said, "we never discussed it as it is the pre-rogative of the prime minister."

-- BERNAMA

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