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Avoid rash acts, Umno members told

KUALA TERENGGANU, Mon. - Umno members have been told not to take rash action, including organising a petition campaign supporting former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who said this today, also reminded students not to contravene the law, including the Universities and Colleges Act 1974.

Najib said Umno members would get a clearer picture of the situation when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself gave a briefing tomorrow.

"Dr Mahathir has never dismissed anyone during his tenure as Prime Minister and as party president. I am sure he has grounds for making such a decision.

"As such, all Umno divisions and members should refrain from rash action. They have to listen to everything Dr Mahathir has to say," he told reporters after a meeting with State Executive Committee for Education today.

He was asked about the move by some members in the Permatang Pauh Umno division who planned to organised a petition campaign asking the party president to pardon Anwar.

On the actions by some students supporting Anwar, Najib said:

"We do not want students to be used by some political parties which could lead to disharmony in the country. You cannot compare the political situation in Malaysia with Indonesia or any other countries.

"Students should understand that the Government is committed to social development and as such, they should not act irrationally or take measures which can threaten national security," he said, adding that the Ministry had issued directives to private higher learning institutions and the police to monitor developments within and outside the campus.

Asked if there had been any report of untoward incidents in campus, he said there was none so far.

He said students were allowed to discuss about the removal of Anwar as Deputy Prime Minister and Umno deputy president but stressed that they should not participate in demonstrations or distributing documents.

"Such actions are clearly against the Act. However, this does not mean that we are restraining students from learning or discussing about the current political situation," he added.

On the move by some students who threw papers and bottles after the Supreme Council meeting last Thursday, Najib said the police were identifying those involved in the incident.

"I am sad about the incident. I know that not all present that day were students. Most were members of political parties and the general public," he added.

Asked if action would be taken against students who participated in activities undermining the Government and its leaders outside the country, Najib said the Government could not enforce its laws outside the country.

However, he said the sponsors of these students, such at the Public Service Department and Mara, could taken action against such students.

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