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## Criticism from students abroad due to unfair media reports

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Criticism of the Government by Malaysian students overseas is due to misleading information and unfair media reports which do not give a true picture of the economic and political situation in Malaysia.

This was the observation of Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Sabbaruddin Chik who was in the United Kingdom last week to meet student leaders and Umno Club members.

He said the students who were exposed to all sorts of influences were against the Government as many of them were relying solely on foreign Press reports and misleading information gathered through the Internet.

Sabbaruddin, who was in the UK for a week, said in most instances, the students had been fed with many differing versions of the situation.

As a result, he said, they were influenced by distorted information on the events and had turned against the Government.

However, Sabbaruddin said at the end of the discussions with the students, it was clear that many of them finally accepted the country's political and economic changes in a rational manner.

"We must give accurate facts to the students so that they can have a clearer picture of the situation at home. Once they acquire accurate information, they can in turn disseminate the information to their other friends who might have been misled by unfair reporting."

Umno, he said, had received reports that Malaysian students abroad had criticised the leadership over the so-called political unrest as reported in the foreign media and widely circulated through the Internet.

To counter this negative publicity, Sabbaruddin said, Umno headquarters would send its members to hold meetings and discussions frequently with student leaders and associations abroad to explain the current developments in the country.

The move, he said was vital as students could not obtain any information on the current situation through the Malaysian Student Department which had to be closed due to the current economic situation.

"We hope that the ongoing efforts will help the students to base their decisions and criticisms more on the actual facts than perceptions and sentiments."

During the discussions and forums, he said, many of the students had asked questions on the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as deputy Prime Minister and deputy Umno president.

To this, he said, Umno had distributed cassettes of Prime Minister and party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech to Umno members before and after the sacking of Anwar.

Sabbaruddin said he had also met with Malaysians who supported the leadership and admired the Prime Minister's stand on the matter and describing him as a strong-willed leader.

He also urged party leaders especially those holding government posts to make it a point to visit the students during their trips abroad.

This, he said, would enable students to be in touch with happenings in the country and help them stay abreast of political and socio-economic issues confronting the country.

In addition, he said, the various Umno clubs could also act as a channel to air grievances and complaints "direct" to the party and Government.

There are now 22 Umno clubs in 10 countries with those in the United

States, United Kingdom and Indonesia having the most members. The first was founded in the UK in the early 70s.

Umno clubs have been formed in Victoria, Australia; New York, Washington, Chicago, Michigan, Connecticut and Boston in the United States; Tokyo; Wanganui in New Zealand; Republic of Ireland; UK & Eire; Jordan; Cairo; Padang, Yogyakarta, Medan, Jakarta, Bandung, Aceh, Pekanbaru and Surabaya in Indonesia; and Karachi.

Most members are students but there are some professionals as well.

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