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Decision to sack former DPM gains more support

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - More support came in for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Umno Supreme Council over the decision to sack Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister as well as his expulsion from Umno.

In Malacca, the State Legislative Assembly passed an emergency motion supporting Dr Mahathir's decision to remove Anwar from all government positions.

All 22 Barisan Nasional assemblymen supported the motion, which was seconded by State MCA chairman Datuk Wira Gan Boon Leong (BN-Duyong). The three DAP members voted against.

It also supports the actions taken by Dr Mahathir on matters pertaining to the national economy and security.

The Malacca State Assembly is the first to pass such a motion since Anwar's removal from the Cabinet last Wednesday.

In tabling the motion, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin said Dr Mahathir was competent in handling the present economic problems, compared to other neighbouring countries which had to seek the assistance of foreign loans to help overcome their economic crisis.

He said Dr Mahathir had used his own wisdom to handle the economic situation and did not adopt recommendations made by others.

"Initially, Dr Mahathir's revelation that the economy was badly affected by foreign currency speculators led by George Soros was met with scepticism, however, those claims were later found to be true and accepted by other countries in this region."

Describing Anwar's removal as tragic, the Chief Minister said immoral activities could not be treated lightly as it would put the Government in bad light.

"Issues on morality cannot be compromised. Such matters will only bring disrepute to the Government," he said. "Therefore, the Government must always maintain a clean image."

Abu Zahar said Dr Mahathir was compelled to take such stern action against Anwar.

He also regretted that Anwar had decided to start a reform movement which may cause instability in the country.

"Such things should not happen especially when the country is facing an economic problem. Efforts should be made to unite the people and not create disunity."

In debating the motion, State Gerakan chief Datuk Chua Peng Song (BN-Bachang) said his party respected the action to sack Anwar from the Cabinet so as to uphold the country's good name.

State MIC chief Datuk R. Raghavan (BN-Bukit Asahan) said the MIC, along with MCA and Gerakan, respected Dr Mahathir's decision because they were convinced that the Prime Minister would not have taken such a decision without considering all possibilities.

The Pahang Umno Youth also declared its support for the action against Anwar.

Its Youth chief Mohd Mustapha Khalid said the movement supported the decision by Dr Mahathir and the council as it believed that it was only decided after careful deliberation.

He was speaking at a Press conference after a special committee meeting at the Legend Hotel.

Present at today's meeting were eight of the 11 committee members. Three other members were unable to attend the meeting due to other engagements.

The decision was made by consensus.

"Political and moral issues cannot be taken lightly because a person of low character and morality cannot be accepted as the country's highest leader," Mohd Mustapha added.

The committee, he said, believed the issue was Anwar's personal matter and expressed disappointment at his attempts to drag others into it while trying to solve it.

Mohd Mustapha said the movement also urged Umno Youth head Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to state his stand on the issue.

He said they would accept whatever decision regarding Zahid's position made by the Umno Youth executive council which would meet tomorrow.

"We are confident that Zahid will make known a stand which will be acceptable," he added.

In Ipoh, State Umno liaison chief Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib advised all Umno members in the State to abide by the decision of the supreme council.

"We have made a decision and we need to stick by it, especially now when solidarity is needed within the party," Ramli said.

In Kangar, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said the explanation by Dr Mahathir on Anwar's sacking was very clear and it was up to the people to accept it.

In Alor Star, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid said Umno members should conduct a self-assessment and determine how they could reform themselves to become better individuals beneficial to the party.

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