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Hishammuddin: CNN report distorted

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri.- Umno Youth acting chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein has come out strongly against a CNN Newsstand report last Monday which he described as "distorted and fallacious reporting".

He said this in a statement issued yesterday to CNN and several foreign newspapers.

The Newsstand report had the heading - "Mahathir says injuries were self-inflicted".

Hishammuddin said the opening sentence of the report was incorrect.

He said: "The report states that Dr Mahathir (Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) had initially suggested that (Datuk Seri) Anwar Ibrahim's injuries were self-inflicted but due to global condemnation, Dr Mahathir ordered an independent investigation."

Hishammuddin said this was a deliberate distortion of the truth.

"In his televised interview, Dr Mahathir said if the allegations of police brutality were true, he condemned police brutality.

"Moreover he ordered an immediate investigation into the allegations and gave assurances that the perpetrators would be punished.

"Umno Youth's stand on this issue is also very clear as evidenced by local media coverage," he said.

He enclosed copies of the local media coverage in his statement.

"It was only at the end of the interview and in response to a question from the assembled journalists as to whether it was possible that Anwar's injuries could have been self-inflicted that Dr Mahathir mentioned that this was indeed a possibility."

Hishammuddin said Dr Mahathir also asked why the police would inflict injuries knowing that Anwar would be produced in court where the injuries were self-evident and the finger of suspicion would point automatically at the police.

"Umno Youth is deeply saddened by the distorted and fallacious reporting from an international TV news network. We feel sure that such deliberate and pernicious coverage is unworthy of an international organisation like CNN that purports to be both professional and hold high standards."

The statement was also issued to Business Times Singapore, Financial Times, Asian Wall Street Journal, South China Morning Post and Sydney Morning Herald.

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