

18 SEP 1998

Razaleigh-Anwar

ISSUE OF ANWAR'S DISMISSAL SHOULD NOT BE PROLONGED, SAYS RAZALEIGH

PASIR MAS, Sept 18 (Bernama) -- Former Finance Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has said that the issue of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's dismissal from Umno and the cabinet should not be further prolonged as it is a normal practice in a democratic country.

He said that the removal of a minister from the cabinet was not something new in the country and all decisions were made after deep consideration by the leaders.

"As far as I am concerned, it (Anwar's dismissal) is a small matter, a normal practice in a democratic country and a unionised action," he told reporters after attending the Malam Pidato Perdana organised by the Pasir Mas Umno division, here, last night.

Anwar was removed from the cabinet on Sept 2 and expelled from Umno the following day over alleged moral misconduct.

Tengku Razaleigh said that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had thought about it for a long time before taking action against his deputy, who was in the government for 16 years.

"Nobody should dispute the Prime Minister's decision and his action is to protect the image of Umno from being tarnished," said Tengku Razaleigh who is Member of Parliament for Gua Musang.

He said that Umno is a party which strives to protect the rights of the people instead of the party protecting the interest of a few leaders, and as had happened before, leaders come and go.

"Anwar's issue is unimportant...what is important is the well-being of the people. I feel that the Prime Minister has discharged his responsibility in this case and as such we should not question the dismissal," said Tengku Razaleigh, who was president of the now defunct Parti Melayu Semangat 46 (S46).

He said it was now that the people should give their solid support to the government for its efforts to improve their standard of living instead of holding rallies to protest against Anwar's dismissal.

Tengku Razaleigh also hoped that Anwar would be wary and not allow himself to be fooled by opposition parties out to exploit the situation.

"I hope he is not being made a fool of by the opposition parties...he may be alone when the election comes," he said.

Meanwhile, Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Ibrahim Ali said that Anwar should be careful so as not to be wrongly counseled as it could be his undoing.

He said that Anwar should now be more patient and try to seek the best solution including through legal channels.

"He should take care of himself...as a leader, he should deal with the problem he is facing with utmost patience," he told reporters after the function.

Ibrahim, who is Pasir Mas Umno division head, said that Anwar should be cautious as there were chances that the opposition parties would take advantage of what happened to him to undermine Umno.

"Anwar should have faith in the police and the courts to ensure justice for himself," he said.

He advised the people including Umno members not to cause trouble as action was taken against Anwar for his alleged moral misconduct.

-- BERNAMA

ZI RM

