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Mahathir: I do not want an immoral person to take over

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he had to act swiftly against his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, to ensure that the country is not led by an immoral leader.

Speaking to members of Wanita Umno, the women's wing of the country's largest political party, Dr Mahathir said if he was not sacked quickly from Government and party, Anwar would replace him as Prime Minister and Umno president if something happened to him.

"I had to take immediate action because if anything happened to me, he would succeed me. I am of the opinion that someone who is involved with such activities is not fit to lead a country," the Umno president said.

Anwar was sacked from Cabinet on September 2 and from Umno the day after. He has been detained under the Internal Security Act since Monday for threatening national security and is expected to be charged with several counts of sexual misconduct soon.

Last Saturday, two men pleaded guilty in court to being sodomised by the former deputy prime minister.

"The action was taken at my own discretion. However, when the supreme council met (on September 3), I gave my reasons and (Anwar) gave his. All members of the supreme council listened to both sides of the story and decided to not only sack (Anwar) from his post but as an Umno member as well," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar could easily be swayed by lust.

"Therefore, when he becomes a leader, he will be easily manipulated by foreigners. He would be exposed to various temptations created by foreigners to satisfy his lust, and they would in turn control him. If we have such a leader, Malaysia will lose its independence," he added.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia could not accept a homosexual as leader and must resist a Western trend towards "too much freedom".

"In some countries, men kiss men. This is so disgusting to see. In Malaysia, we cannot accept a leader who has such strange behaviour.

"In the West, homosexual ministers are accepted. In Malaysia we cannot accept leaders involved in strange activities. I sacked him because of this," he said.

He said Malaysia is different from the West. "Do women want to accept such a horrible leader to become a leader in Malaysia, a Malay leader and a Muslim leader?"

"We have Women's Day, they have Homosexual Day. They have gay parades. They have men sporting long hair and wearing earrings with pride. We cannot accept that as one day God will punish with a very heavy punishment. In Islam it is a big sin," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians should distance themselves from Western trends, where excessive freedom has resulted in there being no difference between men and women."

Citing President Bill Clinton's case where despite the sex scandal the President still gets high approval rating from Americans, Dr Mahathir said: "As Muslims, we cannot accept such leaders."

"In Umno, men and women work together towards the Umno struggle. Women have been playing an important role. This has to be recognised and given due credit.

"We know the difference and we accept this fact. When we ignore the natural phenomenon, there will be chaos," he said.

He also said that what Malaysia is facing politically today has to be handled with care, adding that if Malaysians get carried away, Umno may fail "and we cannot continue with Umno's struggle".

"Umno's struggles are far from over. Unity is the prerequisite for the success of our cause. Our struggles may fail if we are not careful in handling this matter," he said, adding that Umno members can be divided if they let themselves be taken in by foreign propaganda.

He lashed out at foreign media, saying that they were used to deceive the people so that the people would eventually take Anwar's side.

He explained that not many people believe in Anwar or that Anwar has been victimised. "Many Umno members may have thought that the allegations were baseless. In fact, I did not believe it initially when the former Inspector General of Police Tun Haniff Omar told me in 1993.

"I dismissed it then but when I have concrete proof, I cannot afford to ignore it. I have to act."

Dr Mahathir went on to say that Anwar incited the riots last week in order to avoid facing an open trial in court, which would expose all his misdemeanours.

"He tried riots ala-Indonesia. He thought that since President Suharto can be toppled through daily rioting, this too can be done in Malaysia, and democratically elected leaders will have to step down," he said.

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