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Anwar-Statement

NO PRESS STATEMENT ON PARTY'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS, SAYS ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 (Bernama) -- Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today Umno members are prohibited from issuing any press statements about party's internal problems especially those at the branch and divisional level to avoid further confusion.

He said appropriate action would be taken against those who defied the directive.

"We must use the channels within the party," he told a news conference here, after briefing Supreme Council (MT) members who had been assigned with the task to help supervise the running of the branch and divisional elections.

Anwar said he and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at their meeting this morning agreed that all objections and problems raised at the branch and divisional level must be forwarded through the appropriate channels.

For divisions under the supervision of MT members, the matter could be referred directly to MT members concerned, he said.

Anwar said for cases involving the question of membership, they should be referred directly to Umno headquarters.

He also cited as example query by Kota Melaka Umno whether former Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik could contest the divisional chief's post of the division. "Our reply was he has the right as a member to contest," he said.

He said Kota Melaka Umno Chief Datuk Nasir Manap also wanted to know regarding the position of party members in the division.

"We told him that divisional head, deputy head, vice-head, youth head, wanita head and divisional secretary, all have the right to sign the form to become members," he said.

As such, Anwar said the question of a list approved by Umno headquarters which was signed by divisional vice head or secretary did not arise as all were considered as valid.

Anwar said confusion arose as several leaders at the divisional level did not follow developments relating to the party's regulations as well as decisions made by the MT.

At today's meeting, the MT members who were assigned to 21 divisions were given guidelines on how to discharge their responsibilities.

It included directive sticking to the membership list issued by party's headquarters, he said.

Anwar said the MT members would also verify the status of members attending the meeting to see whether they were bankrupts, senior government officers and those convicted by courts.

"They are also given the mandate to make on the spot decision on matters disputed by the members at the meeting," he said.

On varied interpretations of Dr Mahathir's no-contest directive, he said for Kelantan, it was important for Umno members to follow the directive.

"For other states, it could be generally applied...we don't question the right of members to contest, only that they observe party's regulations," he said.

He said that if any members were found using money or threats, stern action would be taken against them.

Anwar also announced another five Umno divisions to be placed under the

supervision of MT members. They are Kota Baharu (Datuk Raja Ariffin Raja Sulaiman), Bachok (Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh), Larut (Datuk Ibrahim Ali), Penampang (Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar) and Kinabatangan (Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir).

The other 16 divisions announced earlier are Tanjung, Tapah, Ipoh Timur, Batu, Kapar, Jempol, Kota Melaka, Rantau Panjang, Kubang Kerian, Peringat, Pengkalan Chepa, Sipitang, Silam, Beaufort, Gaya and Sandakan.

--BERNAMA

MNY ABG