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Supporters fax statements from Manila and Bangkok

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Key supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today faxed Press statements purportedly from Manila and Bangkok respectively.

Saifudin Nasution Ismail, the former Umno Youth assistant secretary who was one of the 10 sacked from the party for taking part in anti-Umno activities, issued a statement with a Bangkok dateline.

In the statement, Saifudin commented on his expulsion. He said: "My friends in the country had informed me that my Umno membership and that of several friends who supported the Gerakan Reformasi, had been struck off."

He said he was not surprised by the expulsion. "As a matter of principle, I will not appeal. I am also not dissappointed," Saifudin said.

He added that to him Umno was only one of the platforms for struggle and that he would now use another platform.

Saifudin also called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to resign, "as the first step towards repentance".

Others sacked by the supreme council on Tuesday included former Penang Umno Youth chief Abdul Rahim Ghouse and Mohamad Ezam Mohd Noor, the former political secretary to Anwar and former Petaling Jaya Selatan deputy division head.

Rahim and Mohamad Ezam had previously issued statements purportedly from Manila and Jakarta respectively.

Today Rahim and Mohamad Ezam issued a joint statement, claiming they were in Manila.

Like Saifudin, they also said they were not surprised by the sacking and that they would not appeal.

They accused Dr Mahathir of being power-crazy. "Dr Mahathir is the president and deputy president. He is also the supreme council, and he thinks he is Umno and Umno is his alone".

They also claimed Umno was on the verge of a split, heading towards destruction.

"The truth is supporters of Saudara Anwar and supporters of Gerakan Reformasi form the majority in Umno and Dr Mahathir and his cronies are the minority," Rahim and Mohamad Ezam said in the statement.

Such allegations and personal attacks on Dr Mahathir were a recurring theme in the statement.

They also claimed they met Philippines President Joseph Estrada yesterday and that the president had asked them: "What can I do to help my friend?"

(END)