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Tapes to be withheld until trial is over

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Umno has decided to withhold release of the tapes of its supreme council Sept 3 meeting until the conclusion of the case involving Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Party secretary-general Datuk Seri Sabbaruddin Chik said the decision was made as the tapes, which discussed the sacking of Anwar as deputy Umno president, might be in contempt of court.

"We have discussed it and decided that perhaps such release will constitute contempt. So we have decided, as a law-abiding organisation, not to release them before the case is over," he told a Press conference today on the party's special general assembly this Sunday.

On Monday, the supreme council decided to make public the tape recordings because the leaked ones had been heavily edited and did not reveal the truth.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said the recordings did not contain parts of Anwar's speech during the proceedings. It was later reported that the tapes would be released by Sabbaruddin on Sunday.

Sabbaruddin said the tapes which had been circulated were only part of the original recordings.

"There are four tapes of the original recording but only 3 1/2 are in circulation. The final part of the proceedings have been left out or heavily edited, and some parts were even added."

He said the conclusion of the leaked recordings was different from that of the original.

He said it was still not known who leaked the recordings, but investigations would continue. He denied suggestions that the court had ordered the party not to release the tapes.

The party records every supreme council proceeding for documentation purposes and the minutes of each proceeding.

On the party's special general assembly, Sabbaruddin said amendments to 17 party constitution articles would be tabled during the one-day assembly.

"There will be 15 new articles and two articles in the present constitution which will be repealed."

The motion for constitutional amendments will be tabled by vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak while the winding-up would be handled by vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Among the most notable proposed amendment is the abolition of the 10 bonus-vote system started in 1987 which gives the president and deputy president 10 extra votes for each nomination received from divisions.

Another amendment is the percentage of nominations from divisions required before a member can vie for the posts of president, deputy president, vice-presidents and supreme council members.

The percentage proposed is 30 per cent for president, 20 per cent for deputy president, 10 per cent for vice-presidents and five per cent for council members.

Sabbaruddin said the amendments to the percentage points were aimed at restricting money politics in the party.

He said no other matter would be discussed during the special assembly. After the amendments are passed, the Registrar of Societies will be notified and the amendments adopted next year.

A total of 1,900 delegates are expected to attend the assembly at the

Putra World Trade Centre.

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