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UMNO-Estrada

UMNO YOUTH REGRETS ESTRADA'S DISRESPECT FOR MALAYSIAN LAW

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 14 (Bernama) -- The Umno Youth movement today expressed regret over statements by Philippine President Joseph Estrada which it says are tantamount to interfering in Malaysia's internal affairs and showing disrespect for Malaysian laws.

Umno Youth international affairs council chairman Abdul Azim Mohamed Zabidi said the movement was disappointed that Estrada, an Asean leader, continued to make negative comments on the internal affairs of a fellow Asean member.

"This is most contrary to the Asean spirit of non-interference in each other's domestic matters," he said.

Abdul Azim said the movement also regretted that Estrada had continued to comment on the Anwar Ibrahim case when Malaysians have refrained from discussing the matter in respect of a high court order that the public cease making any comments on Anwar's guilt or innocence until his trial.

Foreign news agencies quoted Estrada as saying in Batam, Indonesia, today that Anwar was an "honest, dedicated and intelligent public servant" and should be placed under house arrest pending his trial instead of being treated like a common criminal.

Estrada, who regarded Anwar as a close friend, said he was expressing his personal views and may write a personal letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to urge Anwar's release.

Abdul Azim said Estrada should realise that being the head of government of a country, his views could not be separated from his government and country.

"He is the president, not merely the CEO of a company," he said.

Abdul Azim said Malaysia's relations with the Philippines have been very good and there was no reason for Estrada to jeopardise this.

Malaysia had always refrained from making comments about developments in the Philippines which could be construed as interfering in its internal affairs, he said.

Anwar, who was sacked as Deputy Prime Minister last month, was released from detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) today. However, he is being remanded at the Sungai Buloh prison pending trial on Nov 2 on four charges of corruption. He also faces five charges of sodomy, the trial dates of which have yet to be fixed. -- Bernama

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