

20 JUN 1998

Mahathir-Book

UMNO TO INVESTIGATE PUBLICATION OF BOOK DISPARAGING ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the party will investigate whether the contents of the book disparaging his deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, have any basis.

The Prime Minister said that Umno would also like to find out the motive for the book to be written.

"We want to know who did it, why he did it and whether what he stated has any basis or whether the owner of the premises is involved," Dr Mahathir said at a news conference at the end of the second day of the Umno general assembly here.

He was commenting on the statement by Negeri Sembilan Umno delegate Ruslan Kassim who told the assembly that he has proof as to who is behind the publication of the book which has been banned from distribution following an interim injunction obtained in court on the eve of the assembly.

According to Ruslan, he has proof that the book was written "with the blessings of someone within the Umno circle and its publisher is renting a business premises belonging someone within the Umno circle."

According to a statement by the legal firm Messers Faiz and Co, representing Anwar, the book entitled "50 Dalil Kenapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi Perdana Menteri" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become Prime Minister) is published by Media Pulau Legenda and written by Khalid Jafri.

On Ruslan's allegation that several secretariat staff of the party headquarters were also involved in the distribution of the book, Dr Mahathir said that the secretariat would probe the matter.

Asked whether action would be taken against any Umno members involved in the printing and distribution of the book, Dr Mahathir said it was up to the party's Management and Disciplinary Committee.

The committee is headed by Anwar.

On whether the parties responsible for the printing and distribution of the book would be detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA), he said: "We don't use the ISA that way".

Dr Mahathir, who is Home Minister, said that the ISA is used against those involved in dadah and cases like forgery of passports.

He said there has been no political prisoner held under the ISA.

"Unfortunately, when a politician is produced in court, it is still not right.

"If the politician is from the opposition party, it is as if he is privileged, he cannot be detained under the ISA, cannot be produced in court. Even that (producing him in court) is wrong," said Dr Mahathir.

-- BERNAMA

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