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Umno Youth wants council to act against its chief

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THE Umno Youth movement yesterday passed a resolution urging the Supreme Council to take disciplinary action against its detained leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi for supporting former deputy vice president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's reform movement.

At a meeting in Kuala Lumpur, the movement presented Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik with a memorandum for action to be taken by the Supreme Council.

It was signed by Umno Youth deputy head Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein and 20 exco members.

Meanwhile, all youth movements of Barisan Nasional component parties came out with a joint statement which strongly opposes the unruly behaviour of Anwar's supporters who challenged the law by staging illegal assemblies in the past few days.

"Their action is considered irresponsible and has gone overboard especially with regards to our tradition and culture.

"The damaging of properties and historical material displayed at the Umno building not only caused anger and tested the patience of the Umno Youth, but also the other youth leaders of the component parties in Barisan Nasional," Hishammuddin said.

In the statement, the youth leaders of the component parties voiced their support to the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Making it clear that Barisan Youth will go all out in fighting the reform movement, Hishammuddin urged the movement to work harder to explain the actual situation to the people.

He said there will be a mammoth gathering to give an explanation of Anwar's detention to the grassroots. The exact date and venue of the gathering is yet to be finalised.

There will also be efforts taken to gauge the sentiment and views of the members.

Umno Youth, he said, have directed its division and branch leaders to hold dialogues with grassroot members to explain the decision taken by the party's Supreme Council to expel Anwar.

Hishammuddin also warned foreigners not to get involved with the domestic matter.

It was reported that Australian Prime Minister John Howard had upset Dr Mahathir over his statements on Monday that there was an apparent drift "towards an authoritarian rule" in Malaysia.

Howard was also reported to have said that police and other state powers should not be used to combat political opponents.

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