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Abdullah - Anwar

UMNO COUNCIL'S DECISION ENDORSEMENT OF ANWAR'S SACKING

By: E Sivabalan

DURBAN, Sept 4 (Bernama) -- Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said the party Supreme Council's decision to expel Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is an endorsement of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's sacking of Anwar as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

"The supreme council's decision is an endorsement of the prime minister's decision," Abdullah told Malaysian journalists here.

Abdullah, who is Foreign Minister, was here representing Dr Mahathir at the 12th summit meeting of countries of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) which ended yesterday.

Abdullah said that before the NAM meeting commenced he had written to Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, expressing support for whatever the council's decision relating to Anwar's position in the party.

"I've sent a letter to the prime minister through the Umno executive secretary on the impending action (against Anwar) and would support it," he said.

Abdullah said he received a report on Anwar's expulsion from Umno shortly after the supreme council ended its four-hour meeting in Kuala Lumpur early today.

Anwar had attended the meeting as party deputy president.

"The decision is unprecedented (in Umno). But obviously the supreme council members have reasons to come up with such a decision (to expel Anwar)," he said.

Abdullah said he was informed that while the council members were given the choice between secret balloting and open voting to decide on Anwar's position in the party, they had unanimously reached a consensus that Anwar be expelled.

"What is important now is for Umno members to understand the supreme council's decision. Our task is to explain to Umno members (why the decision was necessary)," he said.

Abdullah said it was crucial that Umno remained the backbone of the governing Barisan Nasional coalition under Dr Mahathir's leadership.

"It is our responsibility to support the prime minister," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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