

08 JUN 1998

Mahathir-Leave

UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL EXTENDS MUHAMMAD MUHAMAD TAIB'S LEAVE

KUALA LUMPUR, June 8 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council tonight extended party vice president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhamad Taib's leave and accepted the resignation of Negeri Sembilan executive councillor Datuk Waad Mansor from his post.

The decision to extend Muhammad's leave was announced by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting here.

Dr Mahathir said that the former Selangor Menteri Besar's leave would extend until after the disposal of the case against him under the Prevention of Corruption Act relating to his alleged failure to declare all his assets.

Muhammad is to be charged in the Sessions Court here on Wednesday under Section 25(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1961 (Laws of Malaysia Act 57).

Dr Mahathir said: "We made a decision that he cannot yet resume his duties as Umno vice president.... We also received information tonight that he is to be charged in court."

"As such, he still cannot resume his duties as vice president until the court makes its decision," the Prime Minister said when asked how long his leave will be extended.

Dr Mahathir also said that Muhammad handed over a declaration of his assets including his properties abroad, this morning.

"He came to see me this morning and handed over a declaration of his assets to me," he said.

Asked whether he had seen the contents of the declaration, Dr Mahathir said: "I was very busy so I did not study it properly."

On whether the charges to be preferred against Muhammad and the charges on which he was acquitted in Brisbane, Australia were damaging to the party, Dr Mahathir said: "I do not know whether it damages or not... We have also adopted a stand and if any party member does anything that warrants action be taken against him, we will not stand in the way.

"It is the history of Umno.... There had been several cases of Umno Menteris Besar produced before the court and action had been taken. We will not simply make accusations but if a person is not guilty, we will defend him."

When asked what could be the worst scenario for Muhammad, he replied: "It is not for me to predict."

Asked whether the party was surprised at the extent of wealth Muhammad had accumulated in Australia and New Zealand, Dr Mahathir replied:

"Surprised? Each one of us has his own personal opinion...there is not a resolution that says the party is generally suprised."

Muhammad was acquitted by the District Court in Brisbane of two charges of making a false declaration on the amount of money he was bringing into Australia on Dec 16, 1996 and failure to declare A\$1.26 million (RM2.9 million) when leaving for New Zealand six days later.

On Waad's resignation, Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said that the Supreme Council also allowed his application to take leave from his duties as the head of the Tampin Umno division until after the disposal of his court case.

Waad, 41, who is State Assemblyman for Gemencih, was charged on May 27 on five counts of using his public position for his pecuniary advantage.

He tendered his resignation from the post of state exco to Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Isa Abdul Samad on the same day.

Anwar also announced the expulsion of 11 members from Sabah for joining the Parti Bersekutu Sabah and Parti Bersatu Sabah.

They are Datuk Askalani Abdul Rahim, Datuk Dr Zulkipli Abdul Hamid, Lassim Abdul Rahman, Mohd Dini Khan, Mohd Topik Awang Ajak, Naim Ahmad, Ahmad Nunsi OKK Mahadi, Uda Sulai, Isnain Amat, Pengiran Othman Rauf, Manggo Arow alias Mangaro Orow.

He also announced that membership of Mohd Nor Jaafar (Seremban), Ali Majid (Seremban), Syed Anwar Syed Ahmad (Gombak) and Rohani Mohd Arif (Alor Gajah) had been suspended.

Anwar said that suspension on several others had been lifted. They are Syed Mansor Syed Salim, (Pokok Sena), Azhar Che Ya (Bacok), Shamsuddin Tahir (Pendang) and Tajudin Abdul Rahman (Pasir Salak).

-- BERNAMA

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