

08 SEP 1998

Youth-Meeting

UMNO YOUTH SUPPORTS SUPREME COUNCIL'S DECISION

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Sixteen Umno Youth exco members today expressed their undivided support for party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and reject the reformation movement pursued by the party's former deputy president, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Its deputy head, Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, said that five other exco members who did not attend their discussion had stated their decision to stand by them over the matter. The movement has 25 exco members.

The movement's chief, Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, did not attend the meeting held to seek the views of the exco members on Anwar's dismissal from the cabinet and the party.

Zahid, criticised earlier for not calling for an emergency meeting of the Umno Youth exco, had fixed Thursday for a special exco meeting.

In a news conference held after the four-hour meeting, Hishamuddin said that the meeting was called for a stand of the exco members following statements made at the grassroot level over the issue of Anwar's dismissal.

He said that they would hold a meeting of state Umno Youth leaders here tonight to explain their stand in supporting the decision of the Supreme Council to expel Anwar from the party.

"As such, we strongly condemn Umno leaders especially from the Youth involved directly in supporting, whether in principle or physically, any attempt by Anwar through the reformation movement which is clearly against the party and the government," said Hishamuddin, who is Deputy Primary Industries Minister.

Hishammuddin said he had conveyed by phone the decision of the meeting to Zahid.

Asked on the position of the Umno Youth chief who had been asked to step down by several states as he was said to have failed to state his stand over the issue, Hishammuddin said that the matter would be discussed at the Thursday meeting.

On whether the meeting today made an "proposal" regarding Zahid's position, he said: "What is important is that Datuk Zahid has called for a special meeting...we have decided to wait for the special meeting".

As to whether a no-confidence vote would be taken against Zahid, he said that it was too early to decide.

"We are asking all Youth members at the grassroots and Youth leaders at the various levels to remain calm and to give their support to the Youth exco who will be meeting on Thursday," he said.

The Wanita Umno movement, at its special meeting today, also unanimously reiterated its support for the Prime Minister's action to remove Anwar as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance last Wednesday.

Its leader, Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, said that the meeting, attended by 20 exco members, also supported the Supreme Council's action to expel Anwar from the party.

"The support is given because we place the party's interest and stability above all else," she told reporters after chairing the one-hour meeting.

She said that Wanita Umno would assist the party in explaining the issue at the grassroot level to prevent any confusion among the members.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Senators Club also held its special meeting today and reached an agreement to fully support the action of the Prime

Minister to remove Anwar as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

The club's president, Senator Datuk Rahim Baba, said that the meeting was attended by 40 senators but the 23 others who did not attend the meeting had expressed their support through letters and telephone calls.

Two senators from PAS did not state their stand, he said.

"The solid and continuous support for Dr Mahathir was taken after taking into account the interest and future of the nation which requires political and economic stability," he told a news conference here.

Rahim said the club members believed that the Prime Minister must have had very strong reasons in reaching his decision.

He said that members from Umno also expressed support for the Supreme Council's action to expel Anwar from the party.

"We call on the community to be calm and not be easily instigated and incited by parties with their own interest and political agenda that could threaten the nation's stability," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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