

30 JUL 1998
Youth - Singapore
UMNO YOUTH BACKS DR MAHATHIR ON CIQ

KUALA LUMPUR, July 30 (Bernama) -- The Umno Youth today said it is solidly backing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's stand that Malaysia will not budge from its customs, immigration and quarantine (CIQ) facilities in Tanjung Pagar although Singapore wants them relocated to Woodlands as of Saturday.

The movement's International Affairs Council chairman Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the Umno Youth also urged the Malaysian government to remain firm in dealing with the issue.

Last Monday Dr Mahathir, when approached on the matter during his visit to Namibia, said Malaysia would not shift its CIQ facilities from Tanjung Pagar to Woodlands.

The prime minister had said there must be an international agreement approved by the Cabinet and Parliament for such a shift to take place.

He had said that any documents signed by those who were not the head of government would not suffice.

In his statement today Hishammuddin said whatever Singapore's excuses, the Umno Youth was convinced that the republic's action of publicising copies of minutes of negotiations between Malaysia and Singapore was out of malicious intention which could only make matters worse.

The Umno Youth viewed such action seriously as it ran contrary to the principles of diplomacy and ethics of nationhood, he said.

Moreover such action would not help towards settlement of the issue which both sides were pursuing, said Hishammuddin.

The movement also fully supported a move by the Johor Umno Youth to set up a special committee on Singapore to deal with the issue, he said.

The views, sentiments and actions of the Johor Umno Youth would reinforce the movement's policies and stand on the matter, he said.

On the movement's official stand on Malaysia-Singapore bilateral ties which it would make known on Monday in Tenggara, Johor, he said the Umno Youth would monitor daily Singapore media reports on the development which he said were still not satisfactory.

In JOHOR BAHRU, chairman of the Johor branch of Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM) Abdul Razak Ahmad said as a sovereign country Malaysia has the right to decide not to budge from Tanjung Pagar.

As such the Singapore government should respect Malaysia's decision, Abdul Razak said in a statement today.

He said the PRM felt that the issue should not be a cause for quarrel between Malaysia and Singapore.

"Whatever differences that crop up can be resolved amicably based on mutual respect between neighbours which have close ties historically," said Abdul Razak.

Abdul Razak said both countries should maintain cordial ties and towards this end he called on Singapore to show sincerity.

Meanwhile, the opposition DAP has called on Singapore to defer its Aug 1 date to move the CIQ facilities to Woodlands until an amicable settlement was reached with Malaysia.

DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said: "The latest spat between Singapore and Malaysia over the moving of the CIQ checkpoint of the two countries from Tanjung Pagar to Woodlands is most unseemly and unnecessary."

Lim also said it did not speak well for good neighbourliness and over

three decades of Asean spirit.

"I believe the majority of Malaysians and Singaporeans would want the two governments to resolve not only the CIQ issue but a number of other outstanding issues, amicably without further straining Malaysia-Singapore relations, whether at the people-to-people or government-to-government level," he said in a statement here.

-- BERNAMA

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