

21 SEP 1998

Umno-Anwar

UMNO SUPREME COUNCIL DISCUSSES ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council today held a special meeting to discuss the issue relating to sacked deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is now being detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

No official statement was issued on the outcome of the meeting, held at the Prime Minister's Department here, as a press conference scheduled there at 5.30 pm was called off.

"The meeting discussed the Datuk Seri Anwar issue including explaining to grass root party members the actual situation," said an aide to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, chaired the meeting.

Anwar was arrested at his residence in Damansara here last night following disturbances in the federal capital after he and his followers held illegal assemblies the National Mosque and Dataran Merdeka as part of a so-called movement for reform.

The aide said: "They discussed what Umno should do to defuse this situation, but its not that serious. More work has to be done to convince the people."

Dr Mahathir could not hold a press conference after the meeting as he had to get ready to attend tonight's closing of the 16th Commonwealth Games at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil here.

The meeting was attended by all members of the supreme council except Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, who is currently abroad.

The aide said the council reckoned that Umno had to convince the people about Anwar's position and the charges of sexual improprieties against him.

Dr Mahathir sacked Anwar from the Cabinet last Sept 2 because of low morals.

Anwar, even up till his arrest last night, denied all the charges against him, including the admission in court by his adopted brother and his speechwriter that they were sodomised by him.

Anwar and his followers became more aggressive by holding illegal assemblies and causing disturbances in the federal capital yesterday.

Meanwhile, after the meeting the Umno Youth handed over to party secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik a resolution pertaining to the movement's stand on the position of its leader Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, among other things.

An Umno Youth representative Zein Isma Ismail told reporters this when met outside the gates of the Prime Minister's Department after handing over the note to Sabbaruddin.

The Umno Youth information chief Datuk Abdul Fatah Iskandar accompanied Zein Isma.

-- BERNAMA

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