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We are not defending Anwar, says Abim chief

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KAJANG, Sun. - Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Abim) president Ahmad Azam Abdul Rahman said today he respected the prerogative of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to sack his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

However, he felt Anwar should at least be given the chance to be judged by the court of law on allegations of moral misconduct.

"I am not defending Anwar," he said, adding that what he wanted was for some procedures in the removal of Anwar from the Government and party.

"Abim is getting feedback from the people through the Internet and from overseas. Many people are still confused as to what had taken place."

He added that Abim was not out to undermine the system.

"We want to inform the Government, in all sincerity, of the people's feeling on the issue," he said.

Speaking at a Press conference after addressing Abim's conference on "Renewing the Struggle of Idealism", Ahmad Azam said:

"There is a need to come back to our senses in view of the troubled economy. We must avoid disunity, confusion and political instability."

He said Abim believed in being a "partner in nation building" where everybody could participate in a healthy atmosphere, including expressing their views.

Therefore, he said Abim appealed to the Government to give some "breathing space" for dissenting views and even critical opinions.

He said despite what had happened in the past two weeks, Abim would continue to initiate dialogues with the Government.

"Our meetings with the people are to get a second opinion," he added.

To a question on Abim's role in Anwar's so-called "Reformation Movement", he said the organisation adhered to Anwar's call for justice and fairness and this could be achieved if the media practised fair reporting.

Earlier in his speech, Ahmad Azam said Abim supported Anwar not because the latter was Abim's former president, but on the principle of truth and fairness.

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