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Zahid  
ZAHID RESIGNS

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today resigned as Umno Youth chief.

The decision was final, he told a news conference at the Umno headquarters here to announce his resignation.

He had written two letters to party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the matter, Zahid said.

His last letter dated Oct 1 was to confirm his resignation and the first was dated Sept 29.

Zahid said his decision to resign was not due to pressure from any quarters be they the Umno Youth executive committee or state or divisional youth chiefs.

His decision was in the overall interests of the movement, said Zahid, who is also the Member of Parliament for Bagan Datoh.

"This is my final sacrifice for Umno Youth," he said.

Zahid was freed from detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) two days ago since his arrest on Sept 21.

Last Sept 24, the Umno Youth executive committee handed over a memorandum to the Umno Supreme Council through party secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik declaring their loss of confidence in Zahid's leadership.

The council's meeting on Tuesday is expected to discuss the memorandum.

At the press conference, which lasted less than 10 minutes, Zahid also related his experience during detention under ISA.

"I was detained while holding my company's board meeting in Kota Kinabalu.

"During the two nights I was in the lock-up in Kota Kinabalu and the subsequent detention I was well-treated.

"The police questioning was very professionally done and there was no verbal abuse or physical assault," he said.

He commended the police for their professionalism.

"I told them that I have never been involved and will not get involved in the reform movement and I was not involved in the roadshow or riots," he said.

Zahid had been seen as being aligned to sacked deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who went on a nation-wide roadshow promoting his reform movement following Anwar's dismissal from the Cabinet on Sept 2 and expulsion from Umno the next day.

Anwar was arrested under the ISA on Sept 20 for threatening national security following illegal assemblies led by him and rioting here by his supporters.

Zahid said he was detained as the authorities wanted to know whether he had mobilised the Umno Youth to commit acts against public interests.

At the press conference Zahid declined to elaborate on his resignation as Umno Youth chief but said he would remain in Umno and continue serving the party as a member.

Zahid said he would also go on a nation-wide tour to explain the situation.

"I'm doing this for the party's sake," he said.

"Upon my resignation I hope my executive committee colleagues and Umno Youth members will forgive me for my actions or speeches during my stewardship of the movement which displeased them or which they thought as

unbecoming," he said.

He urged Umno Youth members to give their cooperation to Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein who is now acting head of the movement.

Hishammuddin would also attend the Oct 6 supreme council meeting.

-- BERNAMA

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