

11/09/1998

Zahid says he won't resign, leaves it to Umno Supreme Council

Kamarul Yunus

DATUK Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said he will not resign from his post as Umno Youth chief because of his support for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, and will leave it to the party's Supreme Council to decide on his position.

He said the Umno Youth exco members cannot force him to resign from the post.

"What they can do is only to appeal to me to step down or resign.

"My decision is that I will not let go of the position in the movement. I leave this to the Supreme Council to decide," Ahmad Zahid said after a five-hour special meeting with the Umno Youth exco members in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The special meeting, attended by 25 exco members and 13 state youth leaders except those from Kedah, was called Ahmad Zahid's position in the movement following his support for Anwar, who was removed from all party and government posts last week.

Several exco members had over the past week asked him to make a stand on the movement's position towards Anwar's dismissal as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, as well as Umno deputy president.

Some of these members had urged Ahmad Zahid to step down as youth chief if he continued to show his support to Anwar.

Asked whether there were requests from exco members for him to step down during the meeting, Ahmad Zahid said: "Yes, openly I accepted that (request by exco members for him to step down)."

"After listening to views of my colleagues of the Umno Youth exco, I take heed of their views."

Ahmad Zahid said the move to leave his fate to be decided by the Supreme Council was unanimously agreed to by exco members and state youth leaders.

He explained that under the party's Constitution and the movement's regulations, exco members cannot expel the youth chief, his deputy or the movement's elected office bearers.

"The power of the Youth exco members is actually depended upon the Umno Supreme Council decision," he added.

Ahmad Zahid also said the press conference would probably be his last on the matter. " ... (one) I feel reluctant to announce to the press," he said.

Later, Umno deputy chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said Ahmad Zahid and the Umno Youth exco will determine how best to convey the decision taken by the movement on the matter to the Supreme Council.

"I will discuss the matter with my colleagues and Ahmad Zahid. What is important is that the exco members were rational in their discussion, particularly concerning Ahmad Zahid's position.

"They took into consideration various aspects such as the stability and unity as well as image of the movement," he said, while urging youth members to be calm and respect the decision taken by the exco members.

Apart from this, Ahmad Zahid said Umno Youth unanimously supported the statement made by Hishammuddin on behalf of the majority of the exco members on Tuesday.

Twenty-one of the 25 exco members had declared undivided support for Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir as party president and Prime Minister, and the Supreme Council's decision to expel Anwar.

Bernamea reports: Police investigations on Anwar alleged sexual misconduct is in final stages, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim

Noor said yesterday. He, however, did not indicate when the investigations will be completed.

"Many reports have been lodged pertaining to the case. Some reports on the investigations are nearing completion while others are in various stages of investigations. It depends on how fast we can gather evidence and interview witnesses," he said.

He said after police had gathered the prima facie evidence, the investigation papers will be handed to the Deputy Public Prosecutor to decide whether to charge Anwar or otherwise.

(END)