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Mahathir-Zahid

ZAHID SHOULD RESIGN AS UMNO YOUTH CHIEF, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi should have resigned as Umno Youth chief.

"He should have resigned but he doesn't want to resign to blame the people who dismiss him," he told reporters after visiting the 16th Commonwealth Games Corporate Hospitality Village at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium, here.

He was asked to comment on Zahid's statement that he wanted the Umno supreme council to decide on his position as the Youth chief.

"He knows that if he leaves it to the supreme council, he'll probably be expelled...so he wants to use that to blame the supreme council. His strategy is the same as Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's," the prime minister said.

The majority of the Umno Youth leaders want Zahid to resign for siding with Anwar who was dismissed as deputy prime minister and finance on Sept 2 and expelled from Umno a day later for alleged involvement in immoral activities, corruption and treason.

Dr Mahathir said: "Datuk Seri Anwar should have resigned but he asked us to sack him and when we did, he claimed that it was an injustice."

Asked about some Umno leaders who still supported Anwar, he said this was because they still did not believe his explanation on Anwar's dismissal. Dr Mahathir had said that Anwar was sacked for low morals.

Describing these people as deceiving themselves, he said the government and party would not have acted unless there was sufficient proof.

"But ultimately, maybe when there is a trial, these matters will be exposed, maybe then they will believe," he said.

He said that so far, Umno had no plans to take any action against them.

"But this (support) would have a bearing when we assess their loyalty to Umno later," he said.

The prime minister said the supreme council had unanimously supported Anwar's expulsion although there were known Anwar supporters in the council.

On Anwar taking advantage of the mosques to explain his position, he said that Anwar himself, when he was in the government, had said that the mosques should not be used for political purposes.

He said it was clear that Anwar's stand was not on a matter of principle but on opportunity.

"When he was in the government he did not want others to have the opportunity...but when he is out, he wants that opportunity. So, he is an opportunist," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked about Anwar's plan to hold a roadshow to explain his position and to start what he termed as a reform movement, he said;

"We will act if there is public disorder, but if it proceeds smoothly, we will not take action."

He believed that the reform movement which Anwar was initiating would not get the support of Umno members except those with personal problems.

-- BERNAMA

MAM JK