

08 AUG 1999

Zaharah-Wanita

CARRY ON WITH DUTIES, WANITA UMNO MEMBERS TOLD

KUANTAN, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- Wanita Umno chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman today called on all members of the movement to carry on with their duties in the interest of the party in facing the coming general election.

She said several issues that cropped up after her announcement of a reshuffle of the movement's executive council last Monday had been resolved.

She herself agreed to reverse the reshuffle on the advice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, she said.

"We abide by the decision. The position now is status quo, nothing more to add to it," she told reporters after opening the Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Paya Besar Parent-Teacher Association meeting here.

Dr Siti Zaharah said she would call for a special meeting soon to apportion duties as suggested by the prime minister.

"Even now we (Wanita Umno) are working. As far as I know I have been working so hard to the extent of being oblivious of what has been going around me," she said.

The reshuffle, which saw the removal of Federal Territory chief Azizah Samad and Pulau Pinang chief Sharifah Aminah Syed Mohamad, was reversed at the Umno Supreme Council meeting on Wednesday on the request of Dr Siti Zaharah herself.

The Wanita Umno chief said she had discussed the effects of the reshuffle with Dr Mahathir and agreed to revoke it on his advice.

She said she could not attend the Supreme Council meeting because she was unwell.

Dr Siti Zaharah's presence in Kuantan today for three official functions is her first public engagement since the controversial reshuffle decision.

Refusing to give reasons for the reshuffle, she said: "I am just going to stick to the decision of reversing the reshuffle. The Supreme Council has been informed, so we have to stick to that."

Asked if the episode would affect Wanita Umno's preparations for the general election, she said what had happened was not a crisis and the movement should look forward by carrying on with their duties.

On an allegation that there were three factions in the movement, Dr Siti Zaharah said it was not true as otherwise members would not have been able to discharge their duties all this while.

An executive council member, Datuk Maznah Hamid, had claimed after the reshuffle was rescinded that there were three factions in the movement -- one backing Dr Siti Zaharah, another supporting former chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and the third behind deputy chief Datuk Napsiah Omar.

"That's her opinion," Dr Siti Zaharah said of Maznah's statement.

On reports in today's newspapers, quoting a Negeri Sembilan Wanita Umno source, that she might face a no-faith motion over the reshuffle decision, Dr Siti Zaharah said this had to be explained by the source concerned.

"That you have to ask the Negeri Sembilan leader. Datuk Napsiah is the leader, you can ask for her comment," she said.

-- BERNAMA

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