

08 JAN 1999

Anwar-DAP

DAP WANTS ANWAR-BASHERS CHARGED

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 8 (Bernama) -- The DAP today urged the Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah to charge police officers responsible for causing injuries to former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim while he was in police custody in September.

Its deputy-chairman Karpal Singh said the AG would have to charge those responsible irrespective of how high-ranking they may be in the force.

"The AG, as the guardian of the public interest, should leave no stone unturned to bring to book the culprits in the force," he said in a statement here.

Karpal Singh said the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor's resignation effective today cannot mean closure of the file on the case.

"No one should be spared if there is a prima facie against him. Of course, only the guilty should be subjected to a judicial pronouncement in court," he said.

Abdul Rahim announced his resignation as IGP in a three paragraphed statement yesterday saying he took full responsibility for injuries suffered by Anwar while in police custody.

He said he made the decision to resign following Mohtar's press statement on Tuesday which held the Royal Malaysia Police fully responsible for Anwar's injuries while he was in the legal custody of the police.

Mohtar had said he was satisfied that the injuries on certain parts of Anwar's body were caused by police officers.

However, he said, the special investigation team which carried out the investigations had yet to identify the person or persons responsible for such injuries.

Mohtar had said he would not hesitate "to consent to the institution of prosecution against any individual proved to have committed or abetted the commission of such offence."

Gerakan central committee member Dr S. Vijayarajam said Abdul Rahim's resignation should be viewed positively and not with scepticism.

"Tan Sri Rahim acted promptly after the Attorney-General's observation and that is the proper thing to do," he said in a statement.

Nevertheless, Vijayarajam said given that assault on any person held by the police was a serious matter, such a case should be investigated thoroughly and the guilty apprehended as soon as possible.

He said the Malaysian police force, by and large, was an excellent organisation by Asian standards and "quite competent and professional in its conduct."

"It would be a shame to see its reputation tarnished by a few black sheep," he added.

DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang said he had sent a note by facsimile to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad urging him to immediately establish a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Anwar's black eye and other injuries.

Lim said he mentioned in his note that the setting up of such a commission was the only way to convince Malaysians and the world that Abdul Rahim's resignation was the "beginning of good governance and not another move to evade accountability and responsibility for police brutalities" against Anwar.

Gagasan Demokrasi Rakyat chairman Tian Chua said in a statement that in

light of Abdul Rahim's resignation, the movement believed that the restructuring of enforcement institutions was imperative.

International Movement of Just World Trust president Dr Chandra Muzaffar said the body hoped that Abdul Rahim's resignation was not a crafty manoeuvre to close the chapter on "one of the most shameful and sordid incidents in the Anwar saga".

"It is only when the whole truth about the assault is known and made public as expeditiously as possible that there would be democratic accountability in the real sense of the word," he said.

Aliran president P. Ramakrishnan hoped Abdul Rahim's resignation was not a ploy to mollify public outrage and deflect attention from the central issue which was identifying the culprits who perpetrated the crime of beating up a man under police detention.

Tenaganita director Irene Fernandez said confidence in the police force could only be brought through when the perpetrators of the assault on Anwar had been charged in court.

Malaysian Youth Council president Saifuddin Abdullah hoped Abdul Rahim's resignation would inculcate a new culture among holders of public office to account for the powers bestowed upon them and the conduct of the their subordinates.

PAS Youth deputy chief Mahfuz Omar said he supported the proposal calling for an independent commission of inquiry responsible to Parliament to ensure a fair probe into the assault on Anwar.

Most of those who issued statements reacting to Abdul Rahim's resignation also urged Dr Mahathir to resign as Home Minister.

In SEREMBAN, National Council of Justices of the Peace secretary general Datuk M Ramalingam said it was a brave and wise decision of Abdul Rahim to resign as IGP and take full responsibility for Anwar's injuries.

Ramalingam said in a statement that as a responsible officer of the Police Force, Abdul Rahim had owned up to the initial findings of the Attorney General and the public should not "condemn the force as a whole for the actions of a relatively few."

He said to restore public confidence in the police, he suggested that the new IGP further investigate the assault on Anwar and penalise person or persons involved.

-- BERNAMA

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