

02/05/1999

Dr Wan Azizah criticised for seeking support in Manila

KUALA SELANGOR, Sat. - Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today there was clear evidence of foreign interference in Malaysia's internal affairs and administration as seen during Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's recent visit to Manila.

He said Malaysians did not want foreigners to interfere in local affairs.

"As much as we do not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, we do not want them to interfere in ours," he said at the opening of the Kuala Selangor Umno divisional delegates' meeting.

He said all problems, political or otherwise, could be resolved within the country.

Najib, who is also the Education Minister, said Dr Wan Azizah should not have likened Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership to that of former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos.

"She has humiliated the people of Malaysia and Umno by making such a comparison. Our track record clearly shows that there is no dictatorial rule in Malaysia.

"Our is a democratic country and the people have a right to choose their leaders," he said.

Najib said there was no need for Dr Wan Azizah to go overseas to get moral support and help as all problems could be resolved internally.

Meanwhile, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar said Dr Wan Azizah's move to seek support from overseas would only spoil the esprit de corp between Asean countries.

He said Malaysia did not want foreigners to interfere in its internal affairs.

On Thursday, Dr Wan Azizah was quoted as saying during her visit to Manila that she wanted political support for change in Malaysia.

Drawing parallels between Malaysia and the Philippines under the strong-arm rule of Ferdinand Marcos, she had stated that the Philippines had shown that dictators could be overthrown.

In Bagan Serai, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said Asean countries should not interfere in the affairs of fellow members.

He said it was not proper for Asean countries to support leaders of other countries who went against their Government.

Speaking after opening the Umno Bagan Serai divisional delegates' meeting, Ramli said Dr Wan Azizah's visit to the Philippines showed that she was not confident of getting the support of the people here.

"Instead, she is trying to get support from the Philippines," he said, adding that the Government was not affected by her visit.

He said it was not proper for Dr Wan Azizah to seek help from the Philippines over domestic issues.

In Kuala Terengganu, acting Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said Dr Wan Azizah's effort to seek foreign intervention in Malaysian affairs showed that her struggle was not widely accepted by the Malaysian people.

"If there is a need for change, we will see a massive uprising from the people demanding for change but we do not see this happening here," he said after a meeting with 500 youths at the Perkasa Umno Youth gathering.

At another function there, Umno supreme council member Datuk Mohd Shafie Afdal said the Philippines' decision to allow Dr Wan Azizah to seek

support there was insensitive, especially as it was an Asean nation.

He said the Philippines should respect Malaysia by not interfering in domestic affairs especially when the country had done so much for the Filipinos.

Mohd Shafie, who is also the Information Ministry Parliamentary Secretary, added that the Philippines should not get involved in efforts to destroy unity in Malaysia.

He hoped Philippine President Joseph Estrada and his Government would understand this.

It was sad, he added, to see Malaysians using the international platform to highlight local issues.

Federal Territory Umno Youth chief Abdul Azim Mohd Zabidi said Dr Wan Azizah was only concerned about herself and not of the welfare of Malaysians when she spoke ill of the country in the Philippines.

He said her struggle for justice was without direction.

"She wants to gain sympathy and hopes to achieve what Corazon Aquino did in the Philippines."

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