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Umno-Contempt

MAHATHIR'S EXPLANATION NOT CONTEMPT - SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's explanation on the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in his presidential address at the Umno general assembly yesterday does not amount to contempt of court, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said today.

"The matter was stated within the party forum. Anwar was (previously) a party member and Dr Mahathir explained to members why the action was taken against him.

"This is not something out of the ordinary," said Syed Hamid, who is a lawyer by training.

He was commenting on the the decision of the judge hearing Anwar's sodomy trial to allow the former deputy prime minister to file an application to commit Dr Mahathir to prison for contempt.

Anwar's lawyer Karpal Singh argued that Dr Mahathir had in the address spoken about Anwar's morals and behaviour which he claimed amounted to "pre-determining the court's decision" (on the case).

Syed Hamid said it was Dr Mahathir's right, as Umno president, to explain why Anwar was expelled from the party to avoid any confusion that might arise.

"We judged him from the party's position. Whether he is guilty or not in the eyes of the law is outside our jurisdiction. What we did is based on the party's decision," he said.

Umno Youth acting chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said Anwar's court application today was expected.

"Let the court decide. I feel the prime minister has taken into account the possibility that they we will sue him," he said.

Describing Dr Mahathir's action as bold, Hishammuddin said it clearly demonstrated his patriotism as he disclosed the actual situation.

"In the interest of the party, the prime minister has cleared the murky waters. If they want to sue, go ahead. Let us go through the court and see what actually prevails," said Hishammuddin who is also a lawyer by training.

-- BERNAMA

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