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Waad-Resignation

NEGERI SEMBILAN EXCO QUILTS AMID CONTROVERSY

SEREMBAN, Dec 18 (Bernama) -- Negeri Sembilan executive councillor Datuk Waad Mansor, who faces corruption charges, resigned today in a move to defuse the controversy over his appointment.

He was appointed to the post six days ago following his re-election as the Gemencheh assemblyman in the Nov 29 general election.

"In the interest of the party and the state, I am happy to resign as an exco member with effect from today," he told a press conference.

Waad's appointment by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Isa Abdul Samad caused a stir among several state Umno leaders who questioned the move as he has two corruption charges pending against him.

He was found not guilty by the High Court here on Oct 8 last year on three other charges of corrupt practice but the Attorney General's Chambers has filed a notice of appeal against his acquittal.

According to newspaper reports, Isa met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad over the controversy yesterday.

Waad, however, said he did not discuss with Isa or anyone else about his decision to resign which he described as a personal one.

He said he would submit his resignation letter to Isa today and hoped the menteri besar would accept the decision.

Waad claimed he intended to resign earlier but waited until now to see who among Umno leaders were actively involved in "using the press to solve an internal problem of the party".

Waad, 43, had to give up his exco post after he was charged in court on five counts of corruptions on May 27 last year, and it was his reappointment this week despite his pending corruption charges that apparently sparked the controversy.

At a swearing-in for exco members at the Istana Seri Menanti on Monday, Lenggeng State Assemblymen Datuk Ishak Ismail, who is Seremban Umno division chief, staged a protest against Waad's appointment by walking out of the ceremony.

On Thursday, state Wanita Umno chief Datuk Napsiah Omar questioned the appointment and urged Waad to quit.

Yesterday, Kuala Pilah Umno division chief Datuk Abu Zahar Ujang, who also called for Waad's resignation, said Isa should be held responsible for the controversy.

Asked if he was angry with the Umno leaders who disputed his appointment, Waad said: "I have served as an elected representative for five terms, and although I am still young at 43, I feel my way of thinking is better than that of some of them."

He said he would not take any further action as he did not wish to cause problems.

"The ones causing problems happen to be my friends in Umno. I don't think the way they do, I think in the interest of the party," he said.

Waad said those against his appointment should have objected using the proper party channels instead of "using the press".

He rejected the view that Isa made a wrong decision by appointing him as an exco member.

"When I pleaded not guilty (in court), I thought I am innocent. So when I was offered (a candidacy in the election and an exco post) I accepted," he said.

Referred to the prime minister's statement that leaders must not only

be clean but also seen to be clean and that those facing court actions should not be chosen as candidates, Waad said: "That's a subjective matter...the situation is not the same always."

-- BERNAMA

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