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Mahathir-Youth

ONLY THOSE WITH THE UMNO SPIRIT ARE IN THE PARTY, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there will be no split in Umno as those who are in the party are Umno loyalists who are prepared to champion the party's cause.

The Umno president said those who left the party following the expulsion of former party deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim were not loyal to Umno.

"They came from various groups such as ABIM (Malaysian Islamic Youth Movement) and others...they return to their original organisation and they don't have any loyalty to Umno at all," he said at a press conference after launching an Umno Youth pre-poll special camp at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

Dr Mahathir said his message to the participants, among others, were aimed at clarifying to Umno Youth members on their role in future particularly in facing the general election.

He also said that members of the Umno Youth movement were reminded to continue to be committed to the cause of the party which was launched by those who had preceded them.

"I reminded them because the present Umno Youth members were born after independence and did not appreciate the meaning of imperialism. With the clarification they will be more responsible and put aside personal interest and emphasise on solidarity and strengthening the party in championing the cause of the Malays," he said.

He said the Malays had tasted luxury after independence and lived in security so much so that some of them took the easy way out and did not appreciate the struggles of Umno.

"It is important for me to remind them without UMNO they will not be where they are now," he said.

On his views regarding the Youth movement, he said Umno Youth was now more vigorous and far from being passive as claimed by some people.

On the number of Umno members who had been sacked from the party since the expulsion of Anwar in Sept 1998, he said, between 300 and 400 members had been booted out of the party for various reasons.

He said some cases were still pending and some more members might be sacked.

"Their sacking is not that serious as UMNO has 2.6 million members," he said.

The number that left the party was small compared to the time when former vice-president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah left the party in 1987 for the then Parti Melayu Semangat 46.

"When Tengku Razaleigh left many members followed him including some Supreme Council members but this time (Anwar's sacking) no one from the Supreme Council had left the party," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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