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Siti Zaharah agrees to reverse Wanita reshuffle

Kamarul Yunus

WANITA Umno chief Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman has agreed to reverse the reshuffle made to the movement's executive committee on the advice of the party president.

Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the status quo in Wanita Umno will also be maintained until the next general election, scheduled to be held anytime from now until June next year.

Speaking to newsmen after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting last night, Dr Mahathir said the reshuffle in the Wanita's movement was discussed in the meeting but the decision to reverse the reshuffle was made by the Wanita chief herself on Monday.

Siti Zaharah was not at the supreme council meeting as she was unwell, Dr Mahathir said.

The Prime Minister said he explained to the supreme council members that Siti Zaharah had agreed to reverse her decision on the reshuffle in their meeting on Tuesday, in which Umno secretary general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob was also present.

"Siti Zaharah gave the agreement before Khalil. She will not go ahead with the reshuffle, instead the status quo is maintained," he said.

Dr Mahathir also noted that Siti Zaharah had informed Deputy Prime Minister and Umno vice president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi by telephone last night she abided by the party president's advice to reverse her decision.

"She (Siti Zaharah) admitted that there was a minor crisis in the movement after the reshuffle was announced. As such, I had a discussion with the Wanita chief and she agreed that the reshuffle announced would not have led to a strengthening of the movement.

"Thus, she agreed to withdraw the new appointments and the dismissals," Dr Mahathir said.

Siti Zaharah had, on Monday, announced the reshuffle which included the appointment of two new Wanita Umno state chiefs for Penang and Federal Territory aimed at strengthening the movement for the coming general election.

Dr Mahathir also said the supreme council had approved the setting up of 49 new branches, including one in Western Australia.

Of the total, 23 branches are located in Selangor, Kelantan (14), Johor (seven) and two each in Penang and Negeri Sembilan.

Dr Mahathir said Umno divisions will continue to monitor slanderous remarks by PAS speakers against the party and its leaders in their ceramahs.

"If it necessitates legal action, we will act...", he said.

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