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Fauzi-Speech

UMNO DEPUTY MINISTER SAYS HE WILL RESPECT PARTY'S DECISION

KUANTAN, May 8 (Bernama) -- An Umno deputy minister, criticised for his allegedly pro Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speech at a divisional delegates meeting in Kelantan last week, said today he had met and explained the matter to Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said that as Kuantan Umno divisional chief, the post he has held for the past 26 years, he had always supported Dr Mahathir and had never turned his back on the party especially in time of crisis.

"Is my loyalty to the party under question? I, who have never left the party for 26 years and I, who have never even once defied the party?" he said when met by reporters after the opening of a new school building for SJK (C) Kuang Hwa by Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, here.

His speech at the Tumpat divisional delegates meeting was said to be full of insinuations and implying his support for Anwar that the division passed a resolution rejecting the speech and not recording it in their minute of meeting.

The division also called on Kelantan Umno liaison committee to investigate the contents of the speech which a committee member described as "inappropriate".

Fauzi, who is Member of Parliament for Kuantan, is also alleged to have made a similar speech when opening the delegates meeting of Pasir Puteh Umno division.

Tapes of the recorded speech at the Tumpat Umno divisional meeting are reported to have been submitted to the Umno Supreme Council.

Fauzi said he would respect Umno Supreme Council's decision and would accept whatever disciplinary action meted out against him.

However, he said he was surprised to know now that some had felt offended by his speech since none of the delegates had walked out in protest.

He said he did not see anything bad with his speech even if he had acknowledged as a friend of Anwar as the important thing was to remain loyal to party leadership.

"On behalf of friends of Anwar, I hope that if there are people out there doubting our loyalty (to the party), I suggest that they take a good look at themselves first," he said.

--BERNAMA

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