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Hishammuddin-Suqiu

HISHAMMUDDIN WILLING TO MEET SUQIU TO DEFUSE CONTROVERSY

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said he is prepared to meet and hold dialogue with Suqiu, the election appeal committee of Chinese associations, to put a quick end to the controversy arising from Suqiu's 17-point demands.

"In the interest of all Malaysians and the country, and as Umno Youth head I am prepared to defuse the controversy relating to Suqiu's demands if the committee is truly sincere in settling the issue," he said.

Hishammuddin, who is Youth and Sports Minister, told a brief press conference at the ministry here today that Umno Youth did not wish to see the controversy prolong and cause public anxiety detrimental to multi-racial goodwill.

Suqiu's demands, among other things, called for the removal of Malay special rights and privileges.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has branded the group as extremist for making these demands and that the social contract made among the races as well as the racial harmony enjoyed since independence would have come undone if the demands were accepted by the government.

Hishammuddin, who was rushing to Parliament, declined to respond to questions from reporters and merely said he would brief the media again on developments following his offer for dialogue with Suqiu.

Asked whether the proposed meeting was a conciliatory gesture towards Suqiu, Hishammuddin said it was up to the media to interpret.

Suqiu leaders could not be reached for reaction.

-- BERNAMA

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