

06/11/2000

MYC starts its signature drive

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Malaysian Youth Council will send the signatures of angry Malaysians to the seven American Congressmen who are demanding a retrial for former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

MYC president Saifuddin Abdullah said the signatures would be gathered by its 37 youth affiliates and 110 district youth clubs over a two-week period beginning today.

"It is important that the "silent majority" be given an avenue to express their feelings towards the intervention into the country's affairs by the congressmen.

"The signatures will reflect the dissatisfaction of Malaysians over their recent action," he said after launching the signature campaign at the Mall today.

Saifuddin said the silent majority had up to now kept their feelings and thoughts to themselves.

"However, the unwarranted actions of a few disgruntled Malaysians who had been very vocal in expressing their dissatisfaction through demonstrations had apparently misled foreigners into believing that all Malaysians are against the Government."

To correct this wrong perception, he said, the MYC would send the signatures gathered in the country to the congressmen.

"These signatures of ordinary Malaysians will also show the congressmen that the campaign is not politically-motivated."

Saifuddin added that the campaign would also instill an awareness among Malaysian youths of the negative consequences of belittling and criticising the country's leaders and its administration.

"If they wish to express their feelings, they should do it in a proper way.

"If they are not careful, their action will bring political instability and economic difficulties to the country."

The seven congressmen who filed a petition in the US House of Representatives demanding the freedom or retrial of Anwar are Chris Smith of New Jersey, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida, Tom Lantos, Dana Rohrabacher and Ed Royce of California, Neil Abercrombie of Hawaii and Robert Wexler of Florida.

The resolution demanded that Anwar be given "due process" of law.

They were the same congressmen who had filed a resolution in 1998 for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to step down.

It is believed that the filing of the resolution is part of a series of planned efforts to discredit the Malaysian Government and cause Malaysia to be ostracised by the world.

Anwar's supporters recently revealed they had engaged Janus Merritt Strategies (JMA), a public affairs and government relations firm which specialises in positioning complicated scientific, economic, political and often emotional issues "for effective resolution on behalf of its clients."

On Friday, Dr Mahathir said the US congressmen were ignorant of Malaysian law and that the Prime Minister had no power to order a retrial or dismissal of the charges against Anwar.

"The rule of law doesn't permit the Prime Minister to order a retrial. If Anwar's supporters want one, they should look at law and see when it is permitted."

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