

07/11/2000

Signature campaign to protest against seven US Congressmen

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Barely 48 hours into its signature campaign, the Malaysian Youth Council has already received overwhelming response from the rakyat.

Its president Saifuddin Abdullah said that more than 1,000 Malaysians signed their names to support the campaign launched yesterday.

He said these Malaysians were protesting against the resolution filed by seven US Congressmen calling for a retrial for former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"We hope more people would come forward to express their feelings towards the intervention into the country's affairs by foreign powers, in particular the seven Congressmen," he told reporters after carrying a signature drive aimed at Government servants working in and around the Pusat Bandar Damansara here today.

He added that today's signature drive was assisted by several government servants who had spent their lunch hour to help collect signatures from their colleagues.

Saifuddin also urged all parties, including government agencies, the private sector as well as the Non-Governmental Organisations to organise a similar drive so that more signatures can be collected.

"We don't have a specific target on how many signatures we plan to collect. We just hope that the rakyat would use this avenue to express their feelings and show the US congressmen that we are protesting their petition," he said, adding that the last day of the campaign would be on Nov 18.

He said this was a gerakan rakyat (the people's movement) which did not involve political parties to show that "the voice is sincere".

Saifuddin also said that there were some groups who have expressed their intention to carry out the signature campaign outside the Klang Valley.

He said most of the 1,000 signatures collected so far were from the council's website, <http://come.to/telloff7> and e-mail: telloff7@hotmail.com.

He added that tomorrow the council would be going to Universiti Malaya to get similar support from the students there.

The signatures will be gathered by its 37 youth affiliates and 110 district youth clubs over a two-week period.

The seven who filed a petition in the US House of Representatives calling for the freedom or retrial of former Deputy are Chris Smith of New Jersey, Ileana Roe Lehtinen and Robert Wexler of Florida, Tom Lantos, Dana Rohrabacher and Ed Royce of California and Neil Abercrombie of Hawaii.

The resolution called for Anwar to be given "due process" of law.

Last week Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the US Congressmen were ignorant of Malaysian law as the Prime Minister had no power to order a retrial or dismissal of the charges against Anwar.

(END)