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Umno-Proposal/BM

UMNO YOUTH AND WANITA ENDORSE NO-CONTEST PROPOSAL

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 18 (Bernama) -- Umno Youth and Wanita Umno have expressed support for the Supreme Council's (MT) stand that there be no contest for the posts of president and deputy president in the party elections this May.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said this decision was conveyed by the heads of the two movements to the Supreme Council at its meeting here last night.

"The Umno Youth and Wanita Umno chiefs informed the MT that the two movements have decided to accept the MT's advice and view that there be no contest for the posts of president and deputy president in the elections," Abdullah told a press conference after chairing the meeting.

At its meeting last Jan 3, the MT proposed that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Abdullah, who is Deputy Prime Minister, be nominated unopposed to the top two posts.

Dr Mahathir has been party president since 1981, while Abdullah has been performing the duties of the deputy president for the past one year.

The deputy president's post fell vacant following the expulsion of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in September 1998.

The Youth and Wanita movements will meet on May 10 ahead of the three-day Umno general assembly which begins on May 11.

The MT meeting was chaired by Abdullah because Dr Mahathir is overseas on holidays and a working trip.

Abdullah was also asked on former Umno deputy president Tun Abdul Ghafar Baba's statement that it would be better for the top two posts to be contested.

"It is already an issue that had been discussed. All of us gave our views and this thing is only an additional suggestion from one of the Umno leaders. Discussions will continue," Abdullah said.

Abdullah also announced the expulsion of five members from the party, two of them for life.

The two expelled for life are Usaili Alias who stood as Keadilan's candidate in the Bota state seat in Perak in the last general election and Mohamed Azmi Lop Yusoff who contested the Bandar state seat in Terengganu on a PAS ticket.

Those sacked from the party are Azmi Salleh and Mohamad Embong from Terengganu who had declared leaving the party for PAS and Datuk Syed Omar alias Abu Bakar Abdullah, also of Terengganu, who campaigned for PAS.

A total of 64 members from the Sepang division had been given show-cause letters, he said.

-- BERNAMA

NHD AR YBY