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Hishammuddin: Don't blame others

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Umno leaders should stop blaming others, especially Youth members, Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said today.

"Umno Youth has been blamed for almost everything by various quarters. This attitude has to stop and we must realise that when we point a finger at others, four fingers are pointed at us," the Umno Youth chief said.

"We (Umno Youth members) have been asked to go to the grassroots and meet the people.

"But how many of the other party leaders - Umno supreme council members, Members of Parliament, State Assebmymen and ministers - are doing the same?"

Hishammuddin, who is also Youth and Sports Minister, said if Umno members were serious about strengthening the party, all quarters should contribute effectively to Umno's struggles.

He said this in his speech at the Umno Youth special assembly with party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Also present was Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

About 5,000 Youth members, including executive council members, division heads, their deputies and division committee members, attended.

Hishammuddin said the struggles of present Umno Youth members were different from the struggles of the movement's former leaders.

"Our struggle now is not only to ensure the country continues to remain independent but also to ensure the Malays become a progressive community to face the challenges that lie ahead of us."

Hishammuddin also called on the Barisan Nasional leadership to be stern against those who question Malay special privileges enshrined in the country's Constitution.

"These matters should not be questioned by any quarters including those from the Barisan Nasional component parties."

On money politics, Hishammuddin said Umno Youth fully supported actions taken by the Umno supreme council against those found guilty of practising it.

"If there is any one of us (from Umno Youth) involved in money politics, take action against us. We do not want such things to jeopardise Umno's struggles in upgrading the Malays."

"Holding positions is not a platform for one to contest in general elections or to enrich oneself."

Speaking at a Press conference later, he said he was informed Umno Youth had around 850,000 members. "But we have to verify the list and ensure they are still our members. By the next general election in 2004, we hope to have around one million members."

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