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Umno-Decision

SUPREME COUNCIL ENDORSES DISCIPLINARY BOARD'S DECISION ON SIX

KUALA LUMPUR, May 21 (Bernama) -- The Umno Supreme Council today endorsed the party Disciplinary Board's finding that six party members were guilty of resorting to money politics during the recent divisional elections.

The Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said: "The council endorses all of the board's decisions, including the penalties imposed, the council did not raise any reservation. We fully endorse them."

Speaking at a press conference after chairing the council meeting, Dr Mahathir said it heard explanation by Disciplinary Board chairman Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen Ismail and was satisfied with the process used in determining who were guilty and who were not.

Last May 5, the board found the six members guilty of resorting to money politics, including three division chiefs Datuk Abdullah Omar (Muar), Datuk Zainol Mohamed Isa (Baling) and Mustafa Kamal Mohamed Nawi (Gopeng).

Also found guilty were Bagan Serai division deputy chief Zaki Din, Selayang division information head Rahmat Abdullah and Gopeng division information chief Mohamad Annuar Baharudin.

Abdullah, Zainol, Mustafa Kamal, Rahmat and Mohamad Annuar forfeited their rights to vote and to stand in party polls as well as for appointment to any positions at all levels until 2007.

Zaki also had similar rights suspended for two party elections at branch, division and supreme council levels.

Dr Mahathir said for practical purposes the council could not function as an appellate body as the appeal process was quite complicated and also because of the large number of cases involved.

As such the council was of the view that those found guilty could appeal to the Disciplinary Board.

Dr Mahathir said in the event of the division chief being found guilty by the board, his defeated challenger in the polls would then head the division.

He said should there be two defeated challengers, the one securing the higher number of votes would be division chief.

"No new meeting will be held to elect the division chief," he said.

Should the defeated challenger also be found to have used corrupt means, he too would be punished and in the mean time Umno would decide who should be the division head, Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir said the same principle applied for the post of deputy chief where the winner who was found guilty would be replaced by his opponent.

Asked whether there were more cases of money politics, Dr Mahathir said: "There are, many more...(involving) division chief, deputy chief and other posts."

On Zainol's position as Kedah Executive Councillor for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Mahathir said the positions of Umno members in the government should reflect whatever decisions that were taken by the Disciplinary Board against them.

Asked whether this was just advice or a decision which should be taken by the state government, he said: "A state government controlled by Umno will abide by Umno's decisions."

He said the MT also agreed with the proposal that all division heads

declare their assets and that they would not be considered if they wished to get business opportunities from the government.

He said: "And anyone who wishes to contest in future and who appears to be very rich should give a report on his assets."

Elaborating on the involvement of division chiefs in business, Dr Mahathir said: "We will inform the government that so and so are division chiefs and should not have any business dealings with the government."

However, they were free to conduct businesses not involving the government, he said.

Asked on the position of division chiefs who are established contractors, he said: "He has to choose whether he wants to be a contractor or division head."

On the postponed Kuantan Umno division meeting, he said the MT was still waiting for the final report from the special committee set up under the Disciplinary Board following Beserah state assemblyman Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman's allegation of money politics in the run-up to the division's election.

Fauzi has also lodged a police report against Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob for allegedly committing irregularities when he was the Pahang Menteri Besar.

Asked whether Khalil, who is Umno secretary-general, should temporarily step aside, Dr Mahathir said there was no reason for Khalil to do so.

-- BERNAMA

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