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Rafidah-Economist

WANITA UMNO CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST "THE ECONOMIST"

KUALA LUMPUR, April 28 (Bernama) -- Wanita Umno has urged the Home Ministry to take action against The Economist for carrying an article disparaging Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Its chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said the publication of the article clearly showed that there were foreign elements trying to interfere in the country's affairs.

"We hope the relevant authorities would take the appropriate action against this kind of media," she told reporters after a meeting of Barisan Nasional (BN) Wanita heads with component parties here today.

Rafidah, who is also BN Wanita head, said although the media were free to make criticisms, they should not hurl baseless allegations like what the writer of the article did.

Asked what form of action should be taken against the magazine, she said it was up to the ministry, noting that in the past some other media organisations had had their circulation restricted in the country.

The April 5 article, entitled "The Changing of the Guard: A Survey of Malaysia", belittled the policies and programmes implemented by the government under the leadership of Dr Mahathir.

She said such baseless reports were uncalled for, particularly when the country was trying its best to tackle economic problems and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Rafidah also said it was unfair to compare the capability of Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi with that of Dr Mahathir because the latter has been prime minister for 22 years.

"We should give time to Datuk Seri Abdullah like how we had given time to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir previously," she said.

-- BERNAMA

NM AHH YBY