

Abdullah's

BATTLE AGAINST CANCER PLEDGE



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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Datin Seri Endon Mahmood's protracted struggle with cancer has made the Prime Minister determined to make treatment for the disease more affordable for Malaysians.

"The cost of cancer treatment is very high. The medicines are also expensive. It is my intention to gear our efforts towards making cancer treatment available to everyone, not only those who can afford it.

"That is what we must work towards," Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said in Parliament, after MPs passed a motion to offer their condolences over Endon's death on Oct 20.

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Najib moves motion in House

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He told the House that when his late wife underwent treatment for her illness overseas, she told him that her illness was "painful to bear".

"But she also said that maybe it was a lesson for her, the family and for others. I believe that what she said about the experience being a lesson is today making all of us stronger, including the rakyat, to overcome cancer in all aspects," he said, his voice breaking.

Earlier, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak moved a motion that the House record its grief over Endon's death and its condolences to the Prime Minister and his family.

Abdullah was moved by the gesture.

"Such a move has not been done before.

"I found out about this only when I went to my office today, and I decided to come to the Dewan Rakyat," he said in a 10-minute address.

He said that he was touched by the motion and on what 17 party leaders and MPs said about Endon during the debate.

He thanked non-governmental organisations, government servants, Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) members and Endon's friends for helping her with her activities.

He gave special mention to her deputy in Bakti, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, the wife of the

Deputy Prime Minister.

"As Endon herself could not say thank you to them when she was ill, allow me to thank them on her behalf.

"And also to her friends who have carried out her projects successfully."

He said that Endon appreciated all the help and support from NGOs and government departments.

"Even when she was sick, Endon would talk about it," he said.

Abdullah also apologised for mistakes she may have made.

"If she had done something to hurt a friend's feelings or inconvenienced them, please allow me, on her behalf, to apologise. I believe Endon would definitely have appreciated this stand I'm taking to thank them and to apologise to them for any wrong," he said.

He said that Endon had talked about several unfinished projects.

"Insya Allah, I will help finish them. To those involved in these plans and who are managing them, I hope they will continue because this was her wish," he said.

Abdullah, who had been married to Endon for 40 years, reiterated that he would not take a leave of absence because he wanted to fulfil his responsibilities to the nation.

"I'll continue to carry out my duties, and I think this was also the wish of my wife," he said.