

## **Najib slams fake letter to IIUM as a 'desperate act'**

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**By AZURA ABAS AND AKIL YUNUS**

KUALA LUMPUR: UMNO president Datuk Seri Najib Razak has strongly criticised irresponsible quarters who had vilified him with a false letter addressed to the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) rector Datuk Dr Zaleha Kamaruddin.

The letter, which was sent using the Umno letterhead and Najib's purported signature, referred to the appointment of Datuk Dr Mizan Hitam as IIUM deputy rector of student affairs, replacing Dr Nik Ahmad Kamal Nik Mahmood.

The letter allegedly stated that Mizan's appointment was intended to bring success and glory to "Pro Aspirasi" in order to empower the nation based on Umno's constitution.

Najib said this was an act by a desperate group who would go all out to invoke hatred towards the government.

"I vehemently deny any involvement in this, and have never issued any party letter on the appointment of university officials," Najib said after the Umno supreme council meeting yesterday.

He said this could be verified by the university and also the Higher Education Ministry.

Earlier, at a press conference, IIUM Student Affairs & Development Division dean Dr Akmal Khuzairy Abdul Rahman refuted the attempt to link the prime minister and Umno to the letter.

"The university categorically denies that we received the letter from the prime minister," he said.

The letter was addressed to UIA Rector Prof Datuk Seri Dr Zaleha Kamaruddin on Aug 7.

The letter allegedly indicated Mizan's appointment had been approved by the Umno supreme council and that it was to facilitate the initiation of the "Ops 2020" project in conjunction with IIUM's campus elections on Sept 25.

The so-called Ops 2020 project is a conspiracy theory claiming the government wanted to control institutions of higher learning by ensuring the victory of pro-establishment student leaders in campus elections.

Also present during the press conference was IIUM Corporate Communication Division director Assoc Prof Dr Baharuddin Aziz.

"This fake letter was circulated by people who have malice in their minds and with intent to undermine the peace prevailing in the campus," Baharuddin said.

"A police report has been lodged at the Gombak police station this morning. Any student found to have been involved would be strictly dealt with."

On another matter, Najib questioned the sincerity of Perak DAP chairman Datuk Ngeh Koo Ham's apology over his recent controversial Twitter post.

The post had questioned Umno Youth's and other Muslims groups' intention to stage a protest against the anti-Islamic video clip Innocence of Muslims.

Ngeh had allegedly posted a question on whether Muslims were wasting their time and energy on the matter.

Najib said one could not just blurt out insensitive remarks against a religion without weighing the repercussions.

"We cannot simply make remarks and then retract and apologise when we realise the remarks could have stirred anger or were insensitive.

"If that is the case, we can also do the same, insult and ridicule and then later apologise," he said, adding that the incident showed DAP was insensitive on issues related to Muslims.

Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, meanwhile, said the damage (from Ngeh's tweet) had already been done.

"It showed Ngeh and DAP have no understanding at all of Islam.

"It is only natural for some quarters to hold demonstrations to vent their anger when Islam is being demonised."

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