

Umno wing members want Muhyiddin sanctioned for anti-Najib speech

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By Sheridan Mahavera

Grassroots leaders from Umno's Wanita, Puteri and Youth wings appear to favour sanctions against estranged deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin over his recent speech against Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

But such calls were more from the Wanita and Puteri leaders than their colleagues in Umno Youth, who appeared more forgiving, based on a straw poll by The Malaysian Insider at the Umno general assembly yesterday.

The straw poll surveyed 10 members from each of the three wings at the conclusion of their assembly yesterday, on whether any action should be taken against Muhyiddin, who addressed supporters in Kampung Baru on Monday after the decision to bar him from speaking at the assembly.

At the gathering, Muhyiddin had criticised Najib's handling of controversies related to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and the RM2.6 billion "donation".

Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Abdul Rahman Dahlan later said Muhyiddin could face action for breaching party discipline.

In the poll, 13 Wanita, Puteri and Youth leaders said action should be taken against Muhyiddin, while 10 felt that he should not be punished.

The remaining seven were not sure, saying it was up to the Supreme Council to decide.

Of those who wanted action, six were from Puteri, five from Wanita and two from the Youth wing.

In contrast, six of the 10 Youth members surveyed felt punishment was unnecessary, together with three from Wanita and one from Puteri.

Those who wanted the Supreme Council to decide comprised three from Puteri and two each from Wanita and Youth.

These leaders were delegates to the wing's assemblies and are part of Umno's divisions, the party's influential middle-echelon.

Going too far

Batu Gajah Wanita Umno chief, Ashiah Othman, said while differences of opinion should be tolerated, Muhyiddin had gone too far.

"We have to take appropriate action in the party. Differences of opinion are okay but Tan Sri Muhyiddin has caused turmoil in the country," said Aishah.

On his part, Muhyiddin said he had addressed supporters separately because he had been blocked from delivering the opening speech at the wing's assemblies as was the practice in the past.

The Supreme Council has also decided to bar Muhyiddin from giving the winding-up speech at the end of the assembly.

Lumut Umno Youth division chief, Mohd Shahril Yahya, felt that Muhyiddin should not have attended Monday's gathering and aired his differences openly.

"There will always been misunderstandings in any political party, but we feel that these misunderstandings should only be aired behind closed doors.

"We respect Muhyiddin but we don't think he should have done that," said Shahril.

Ketereh Puteri Umno vice-chief, Rosbadariah Abdullah, said Muhyiddin should have used proper channels to air his grievances.

"The boss is still the boss. I am also a vice-chief and I have to use the proper channels. If you want to disagree there are better ways," she said.

For Umno Youth exco, Datuk Jeffri Salim, the Najib-Muhyiddin rift was a family affair which could still be settled internally.

"I respect both my president and deputy president but we should all abide by the constitution," said Jeffri. – December 10, 2015.

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