

## **UMNO urged to heed call for Ahmad Zahid to go on leave**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- UMNO has been urged to heed the call from its Youth chief Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki for Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to go on leave pending the end of his court trial for various alleged offences.

Political analyst Md Shukri Shuaib said the suggestion should be discussed at that party's supreme council meeting to obtain the final decision from all members.

"The call has a basis and in this context any party member must be mindful to the party constitution as a party must be collectively governed," said Md Shukri, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) Political and International Affairs senior lecturer when contacted by Bernama today.

Yesterday, UMNO Youth urged Ahmad Zahid to consider to go on leave pending his court cases.

Asyraf Wajdi said the suggestion was aimed at giving Ahmad Zahid an opportunity to focus his efforts on clearing his name in the court of law over the 45 charges he faces.

However, it received mixed reactions including from among UMNO leaders and netizens.

UMNO secretary-general Tan Sri Annuar Musa viewed the call from UMNO Youth as clear indication of the 'openness' of the seven-decade old party.

"It's not wrong for the youth to make suggestion. They chose to use the media instead of in-house channels such as face-to-face, political bureau, management committee or the supreme council," he said this on his Twitter page.

Meanwhile, UMNO Supreme Council member Datuk Armand Azha Abu Hanifah said the call was only relevant if UMNO was still the ruling party.

“In today’s political landscape where UMNO is an opposition party and cannot influence the legal process in court, then it is not necessary for the party president to go on leave,” he said.

He also urged all party members to defend the UMNO president until the legal process was completed.

Elsewhere, Puteri UMNO chief Datuk Zahida Zarik Khan said the movement had always prioritising maturity and close relationship with the party’s management committee, political bureau and supreme council.

“We understand the challenges faced by anyone who leads the opposition and we believe UMNO president has the wisdom to decide,” she said.

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