

Musa's statement baseless, says

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described as "baseless" and "mischievous" the allegations by former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Musa Hitam that he would call for a snap election within a year and declare an emergency if he appeared to be losing.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno Baru president said Datuk Musa's statement was deliberately designed to destabilise the economic and political situation in the country.

"We are sad that such a statement was made by a person who is responsible to his country," he told a Press conference at Umno Baru headquarters after chairing a five-hour Supreme Council meeting.

Datuk Musa made these allegations in his speech to the Hong Kong Foreign Correspondents' Club on Wednesday.

He was also reported to have said that before declaring an emergency, Dr Mahathir would first create trouble to legitimise his action.

Dr Mahathir said the party's supreme council took a serious view of his allegations which were "totally baseless" and deliberately made to cause restlessness among the people.

"To say that a snap election would be held within a year would cause local and foreign businessmen and investors to be restless during that period. This will not help the economy," he said.

On Datuk Musa's allegation that half the MCA wanted to leave the Barisan Nasional because of Dr Mahathir's plan to hold a snap election, he said: "The MCA has said that it had no intention of leaving the Barisan."

Asked whether any action would be taken against Datuk Musa for making the allegations, Dr Mahathir said: "We are a democratic country. We can express our views ... so no action will be taken. But we regret that he did not have the interest of the nation at heart when making the statement during which he gave an inaccurate picture of the country."