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Abdul Aziz withdraws quit letter after talks with Hishammuddin

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Deputy Umno Youth chief Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir has withdrawn his resignation letter which he submitted to party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Friday.

He said he decided to withdraw the letter after having discussions with Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein last Saturday and Sunday.

Abdul Aziz said he had wanted to resign as the movement's deputy chief because he was unhappy with Umno which he claimed was not listening to its members and that the Barisan Nasional's defeat in the Lunas state by-election was "the final blow".

He said he had felt then that he did not want to waste his time in the party if he could not contribute effectively.

"I want to use my time for better things and I do not want to be associated with failures."

Abdul Aziz said he was staying in Umno with the hope that it would reform. He was "very confident that this would happen", he added.

"We have to make sure that we are the people's choice. Everything needs to be reformed if we want to win the election including our image, credibility, the way we talk and the way we treat people," he said after a five-hour Umno Youth exco meeting which was chaired by Hishammuddin at the party headquarters.

It is learnt that Abdul Aziz had wanted to resign because he was unhappy with the attitude of certain Umno supreme council members who had accused Umno Youth of not playing an effective role in the Lunas by-election.

He said it was wrong to say that Umno Youth members were not campaigning in the by-election.

"There are other factors for the BN's defeat such as the wrong choice of candidate and our failure to explain to the Chinese community the concept of Vision School," he added.

In the by-election last Wednesday, Parti Keadilan Nasional's candidate Saifuddin Nasution Ismail won with a 530 majority. He polled 10,511 votes while BN's S. Anthonysamy received 9,981.

Independent candidate N. Letchumanan received 50 votes and lost his deposit.

Abdul Aziz said he would meet the Prime Minister "in a day or two" to convey his decision to continue serving the party.

"Anyway, Hishammuddin has already informed Dr Mahathir of the decision.

"If Dr Mahathir decides to accept my resignation, then I would go. That would mean that the Prime Minister does not want to reform Umno," he said.

On why he did not discuss his decision to resign with Umno Youth exco members first, Abdul Aziz said it was because he knew they would not let him do so.

"At today's meeting, I have explained my situation to the exco members and I think that I owe an explanation to the party president. But there is no need for me to explain to the public.

"My resignation is not a sandiwara. I really want to resign. This is not a Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik's chapter (referring to Ling's move sometime this year to resign as the Transport Minister but which he later retracted)."

Earlier, Hishammuddin said among the things discussed at the meeting was the movement's progress over the past six months since the party elections in May.

"We admit there are weaknesses and we have to work hard to overcome them so that the people can see the hardwork we have put in."

On newspaper reports quoting Umno Youth exco member Dr Shamsul Anwar Sulaiman as saying that the movement under Hishammuddin was weak and had lost its direction, Hishammuddin said anyone was free to express his views.

"We welcome criticisms provided that it helps us to improve ourself and to strengthen the party,

"I hope all the exco members would work together to build a stronger and united movement," he said.

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