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Delegates' decision crucial to MCA

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The "Gang of Eight" today reminded delegates to tomorrow's extraordinary general meeting that their decision was crucial to the party's political future.

In a statement, they said their vote would be a vote for "winning the hearts and minds of the people" or "a full confrontation with the Chinese community".

"Being a political party, are we going to dismiss the wishes of the people? Many of them have been our friends over the years.

"Who supported us over the last two general elections? How could we not listen to the conscience calls from the Chinese community?

"Are we prepared to abandon those who supported us in silence to trade for a commercial transaction which may lead us to direct confrontation with the Chinese community?"

They said they were worried that a confrontational stand would lead the MCA towards catastrophe.

MCA vice-president Datuk Chan Kong Choy, one of the members of the group, reiterated that no one should use Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's name for their own political interest.

He said it was unfair to involve the Prime Minister in the controversy.

"The PM has made it very clear that he never directed the MCA. So no one should drag the PM into this controversy."

Meanwhile, the Youth section of the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall urged delegates to vote against the takeover and put the interests of the nation and community above that of MCA and individuals.

"Whatever the outcome, society should continue to pursue for a free and independent media," said its chairman Jean Lee.