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#### MCA suspends Youth central panel (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The MCA today suspended the 46-member Youth central Committee (CC) and certain parts of the movement's by-laws with immediate effect.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said with the decision, no extraordinary general meetings or CC meetings could be held while activities in the movement were also suspended.

"This decision to suspend shall not in any way affect the operations and functions of branch, division and state youth sections," he told reporters after a two-and-a-half hour CC meeting at Wisma MCA here.

The Youth CC's function would be taken over by a committee comprising former national organising secretary Wang Choon Wing as its chairman and MCA CC members Datuk Poh Ah Tiam and Datuk Hon Choon Kim.

In the unprecedented move, all Youth CC members including Youth head Datuk Ong Tee Keat have been rendered powerless until a new team of leaders is voted in during next year's party election.

Dr Ling said the decision was reached at the MCA CC meeting today after the committee voted 31 to eight for the resolution.

"The CC felt disappointed that the Youth movement got into this crisis. They held an unconstitutional EGM, could not hold a proper annual general meeting and Youth CC meeting.

"The CC hopes that under the three-man committee, order, peace and stability can be restored to MCA Youth," he told a Press conference flanked by vice-presidents Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and Datuk Fong Chan Onn, Wanita head Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen, Hon and Poh.

Asked whether any disciplinary action would be taken against Ong, Youth secretary-general Yew Teong Look and Youth assembly speaker Lim Hong Sang who had been censured for causing the Aug 3 Youth AGM fracas, Dr Ling said it was not discussed during the CC meeting.

Before the start, about 100 supporters of the party's dissenting faction, known as Team B, gathered outside the headquarters in a show of support.

Team B leaders arrived in a convoy about 4.40pm to the shouts of "Ah Lek" (deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek) and "Tee Keat".

After the meeting ended about 7.30pm, the supporters who numbered almost 200 by then, cheered the Team B leaders as they made their way out. Ong was also carried by the supporters who sang the Chinese "Unity is Strength" song.

The Team B leaders later adjourned to a nearby restaurant for dinner.

In a Press conference later, Lim said that they (Team B) did not accept the decision. Their objection was based on the principles of the party constitution and rules of natural justice.

He blamed Dr Ling and said that they could no longer rally support around him.

"By suspending the Youth CC, he (Dr Ling) is stopping all attempts to call for an EGM over the present issues plaguing the MCA youth.

"If you (Dr Ling) have the courage of your convictions, you should bring it to the attention of an EGM," he said.

He said Team B members would embark on a nationwide roadshow immediately to explain to members and the community their stand, the reasons for their actions and the truth surrounding the decision.

"We will listen to what the people have to say and will decide on our

next course of action based on the feedback we receive."

Also present were vice-presidents Datuk Chua Jui Meng and Datuk Chan Kong Choy, Ong, Deputy Wanita head Datin Paduka Dr Tan Yee Kew, Datuk Tang See Hang and Datuk Fu Ah Kiow. All eight, including Lim, voted against the resolution tabled in the CC meeting earlier.

Lim urged members to rally behind Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir to show that they supported him despite all the "manipulation" going on in the party.

Asked if the party would seek Dr Mahathir's intervention to resolve the ongoing dispute, he said it would not be fair to ask him and that they would only keep him duly informed on what was going on.

Ong said that though he was deeply disappointed with the decision, the spirit of the MCA Youth had not been broken.

"We are undeterred by the decision and will continue to give our undivided support to the Barisan Nasional, especially in the coming by-election.

"I am still the Youth chairman but in a different scenario altogether," he said.