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Zainol decides to relinquish Exco post

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ALOR STAR, Wed. - Datuk Zainol Md Isa said today he will relinquish his State executive councillor's post this week but will not give up his Bayu State seat.

Claiming his decision to resign had not been made under pressure, Zainol, however, maintained he was not involved in money politics.

He would be appealing to Umno's disciplinary board but said it would not be in the near future.

Zainol said although he, as a party member, abided by the Umno supreme council's decision to endorse the findings of the disciplinary board, he needed to clarify the charges against him.

"I have not indulged in money politics. I cannot afford to do so because I do not have the money."

He contended that he was only charged with misusing his position as a State Assemblyman to gather youths and village security and development committee leaders for a meeting and that there was no monetary transaction.

"I have accepted the sentence. The charge was for misusing my position as a State Assemblyman to hold a youth meeting at a hotel in Sungai Petani and the sentence was for that offence."

Zainol, 52, said since he had accepted the punishment, he had no problem relinquishing his Exco post.

"I will be sending an official letter to the Menteri Besar informing him of my resignation soon," he told a Press conference at Wisma Darul Aman here.

The Press conference had been called by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain after the State Exco meeting took a lunch break. Several other Exco members were also present.

The Umno supreme council meeting chaired by party president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Monday endorsed the disciplinary board's findings to suspend Zainol and five others for practising money politics.

For the offence, Zainol was also removed as Baling division chief, the post he won at the April 28 division elections after defeating incumbent chief Datuk Raja Ariffin Raja Sulaiman with a 107-vote majority.

Zainol, who is the State Agriculture and Rural Development Committee chairman, urged his supporters in Baling to remain calm and united and give their support to the supreme council.

He also pledged to work hard and contribute to the party in his division and at the State level when he is no longer an Exco member.

"I will continue to support the party and the State leadership ... the Menteri Besar has given me a lot of support and guidance and all these experiences I would use in serving the party."

Syed Razak said he would accept Zainol's resignation and proceed to inform the Sultan of Kedah about the matter.

"I am thankful Zainol could accept his sentence ... what's important now is that the matter is closed and we consider it closed."

Asked whether there would a reshuffle in the Exco line-up, Syed Razak said he had not thought about it yet.

He said a reshuffle or appointment of a new Exco member to replace Zainol was not that crucial since the remaining nine Exco members could still handle the State administration.

The present State Exco members took their one-year oath of office on Dec

7, last year.

On whether Zainol's decision to remain as Bayu Assemblyman would affect Umno's image, Syed Razak said it would not.

"We still support him as an Assemblyman," he said.

Asked whether Zainol's position was discussed at the Exco meeting, Syed Razak said the matter was not raised at all.

"It is my prerogative to appoint (an Exco member) and it is his right to step down.

"After considering things and discussing the matter with me, he (Zainol) made his decision (to step down)," he said.

Zainol served as the State Assembly Speaker in 1995 and has been a State executive councillor since 1998. He is the most senior Exco member in the present State administrative line-up.