

# MCA truce broken

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## Ling's group rejects PM's formula; party polls to proceed

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The peace formula offered by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the MCA leaders to end their feuding is in tatters. The faction led by party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik has rejected it.

The formula calls for the party top leadership to remain at status quo, deferment of division party elections and the cancellation of the EGM called by the faction headed by deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek.

It is learnt that while Ling's faction Team A rejected the formula at a late night meeting on Thursday at the home of Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Team B accepted it

Ling's rejection of the formula was based on the requirement that party divisional elections must be called off.

Yesterday afternoon, Lim announced the cancellation of an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) which was called by Team B.

"The advice (given by the PM) is driven by the desire for unity and has provided the framework for a resolution of the present split within the party," Lim told a packed press conference.

However, minutes after Lim's press conference, MCA secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chiew Peh announced just the opposite.

"The decision to hold the elections was made by the Central Committee (CC). At this juncture, I have not been told or heard of any changes," he said.

Ting said "rumours that elections have

been postponed were baseless".

Sources said Mahathir decided to call in the leaders of the two factions to prevent the feud from going beyond a point of no return.

They said this would be bad for the Barisan Nasional, which is in a strong position except for the problem facing the MCA, especially at a time when it is gearing up for the next general election.

It is irresponsible, they said, for some MCA members to spread rumours that Umno is interfering in the Chinese party's affairs.

They said MCA members must not forget that it was the MCA leaders who had approached the Prime Minister in his capacity as BN chairman and had been meeting him since last year to seek his advice.