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Hishammuddin-Cabinet

CABINET MINISTERS NEED NOT RESIGN, SAYS HISHAMMUDDIN

IPOH, Feb 2 (Bernama) -- Cabinet ministers need not resign when Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad retires in October but they must be prepared to accept the decision of the prime minister's successor to retain or drop them from his administration.

Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the issue of present leaders should or should quit from their posts did not arise as "everything will be decided by the new prime minister."

When the new prime minister officially takes office, the present leaders should wait for the decision whether they are retained or new faces named to replace them and they must abide by the decision, he said.

"This is the normal practice when a new prime minister takes over. This is not for personal interest but for the interest of the party.

"What's important is that whatever decision made, it should not harm the prevailing unity and our ability to function as a strong and vibrant party," he told reporters after attending an election briefing by the Perak Umno Youth with Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali here today.

Hishammuddin, who is also Umno Youth chief, was responding to a statement by Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik yesterday that all Cabinet ministers must tender their resignation when Dr Mahathir retires in October in accordance with parliamentary principles and practices.

Dr Lim, who is Primary Industries Minister, said this was necessary to pave the way for a smooth and orderly transition of power and to enable the new Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to reappoint or make new appointments to his cabinet.

Hishammuddin said Dr Mahathir himself had said that the choice of selecting leaders was the prerogative of the new prime minister and party president.

"At the Umno supreme council meeting recently, everybody unanimously agreed to leave it to the new prime minister and Umno president to decide on the appointment of leaders," he added.

Meanwhile, Tajol Rosli, who is also Perak Umno liaison chief, said there was no need for the ministers to resign as the new prime minister would decide on his Cabinet appointments after the general election.

"This is the normal process. This practice of the prime minister having the prerogative to appoint his Cabinet members has been adopted since before and this will be continued by the new prime minister," he said.

In SUNGAI SIPUT, Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu declined to comment on Dr Lim's statement, saying it was his personal opinion.

"That's his view but I don't think the same way," he told reporters after attending a Perak Umno Youth gathering with Hishammuddin.

-- BERNAMA

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