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Cabinet appointments still valid, rules Speaker

reports on "Dewan Rakyat" by Jason Gerald; Sujatani Pusparajah; Farrah THE Cabinet of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is still valid under the Constitution although Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is now the Prime Minister.

Hence, the question of a new Cabinet does not arise, Speaker Tun Mohamed Zahir Ismail said.

He said this in response to Mahfuz Omar (Pas-Pokok Sena) who yesterday sought a ruling on the status of the Cabinet after the appointment of the new Prime Minister.

"The current Parliament is the 10th Parliament where Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, were appointed on Dec 14, 1999 after the 1999 general election.

"According to Article 43(2)(a), the Prime Minister is a Cabinet Minister. If any minister resigns or is asked to resign by the Prime Minister then another (Parliament) member will be appointed.

"This ruling also applies in the appointment of the Prime Minister. A new Prime Minister was appointed on Oct 31 following the retirement of his predecessor, therefore there is no need for the other Cabinet ministers to be re-appointed as their current term is still valid."

Zahir said ministers would remain in office unless they resign or their appointments were revoked by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

The Speaker said a new Cabinet had to be formed if Parliament was dissolved and a general election was called or the Prime Minister no longer enjoyed the support of the majority of Dewan Rakyat members.