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Razaleigh: I don't intend to contest

UMNO supreme council member Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah yesterday expressed surprise that his name was linked to the issue of contest for top party posts.

After two days of keeping his silence, Razaleigh issued a statement saying what was more surprising (besides being linked to the contest) was that he was not in a position of importance.

"I sincerely want to state here that I have no intention towards that end. All this while, I have not moved anywhere. I've confined my movements to my Gua Musang constituency and other areas I was directed to go by the Umno supreme council," Razaleigh said in response to remarks by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in a Malay daily on Sunday.

The Prime Minister had said that he was worried that there would be a power struggle for the deputy president's and vicepresidents' posts after he stepped down.

Dr Mahathir, responding to a question, had said he did not think either Razaleigh or former Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Musa Hitam would challenge Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who is to succeed Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir also said if either of them did (challenge Abdullah), he would not win.

Musa had responded to Dr Mahathir's remarks earlier and said he had no desire to challenge Abdullah for the Umno presidency.

Razaleigh said what was more important for him was to continue contributing towards strengthening party unity and to assist in improving the standing of the Malays as a whole.

"More specifically, I want to contribute in facing the next general election and other challenges which we have to face collectively.

"I would also like to wish Dr Mahathir all the best in his retirement."