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Declare openly or in private, elected reps advised

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Elected representatives who want to step down before the next general election can do so in an open declaration or in confidence and must explain their reasons, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said today.

After having done so, he said they should then pledge their support for the representatives who will take over from them.

Muhyiddin said this should all be done preferably a few weeks before the election.

He said that an open declaration could be made by informing the leaders in their constituency or alternatively, the MP could tell the party president, liaison committee or even the Menteri Besar in private.

"They will then affirm their support for the new person and make the announcement of their resignation later," he said today.

On May 23, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that elected representatives who did not perform well will be dropped in the next general election.

Subsequently national leaders, in support of Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said elected representatives who felt that they could no longer perform should voluntarily step down.

Muhyiddin, however, said that cases of elected representatives being asked to voluntarily step down were few and far between.

He added that the timing of the elected representatives' resignation did not have to be immediate, but should preferably be before the general election.

"The best time to step down would be several weeks before the election, the earlier the better because the coalition leaders can select new candidates to run for the vacant posts."

Muhyiddin said changes made must always be in the best interest of the party.

He also said representatives need not necessarily step down because they were ineffective as they could be doing so to give way to new leaders and that it was the right time for them to do so.

Another Umno vice-president, Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib, said the country needed committed representatives to work for the people.

He said the BN wants strong representatives who are close to the people.

"So if the current representatives do not have these qualities, then the coalition has to replace them.

"We have a pool of talented young leaders that the coalition can tap from. So when these new people replace the current representatives, there must not be any complaint because it is their own fault for not doing a good job," he said.

Muhammad said that ideally the representatives should withdraw before or during the general election.