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Supreme council to decide on acting deputy president

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The Umno supreme council will decide whether there is a need to appoint an acting deputy president or leave the post vacant until the next party election, said vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib today.

Muhammad said there was no provision under the party constitution for the appointment of an acting deputy president and it was up to the discretion of the supreme council.

He said clause 9.9 of the party constitution only mentioned that when the party president resigned, his deputy would be made the acting president until the next general assembly when a new president was elected.

Muhammad said among the options that could be taken by the supreme council was to appoint an acting deputy president or to ask one of the three vice-presidents to discharge the duties of the deputy president.

The other party vice-presidents are Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

"When former Umno deputy president (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim) was removed from his post, one of the vice-presidents (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) was asked to carry out the duties of the deputy president.

"It is up to the acting president (Abdullah) and the supreme council to decide," he said.

Muhammad was asked whether the Umno constitution had any provisions for the appointment of an acting deputy president.

Yesterday Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced that he was resigning as party president and that Abdullah would be the acting president until the party election scheduled for next year.

Former Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat said there was no urgent need for Abdullah to name his deputy as the other party leaders could help him carry out his duties temporarily.

"Perhaps Abdullah needs more time to adjust to his new role and we should give him an opportunity to settle down first. There is no urgent need to decide who should carry out the duties of the deputy president.

"The other senior party leaders are capable of assisting Abdullah. The supreme council can appoint one of its vice-presidents to carry out the deputy president's duties or they can also appoint an acting deputy president," said Mohamed.