

**Malay NGO wants Umno to lead Penang BN, not Gerakan**  
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**by Susan Loone**

Not everyone thinks Gerakan should lead Penang BN into the 13th general election, even as signs indicate that state BN chief Koh Tsu Koon will tomorrow announce a successor from his party to take charge of the coalition in Penang.

A Penang-based Malay NGO has proposed that Umno leads the BN coalition in Penang, and not Gerakan, as this would be beneficial to the Malay community, which often claims it is being marginalised by the state government.

Penang Malay Congress (PMC) president Rahmad Isahak has challenged Umno to rise and lead the Penang BN, instead of letting Koh pass the baton to another Gerakan leader.

"Let us forget the tradition of the past, for the political pattern in the state has changed," Rahmad told reporters yesterday.

A holistic proposal for Umno

Penang Umno should be given the chance to lead the state into the looming general election as it was the only party in BN that secured 11 seats in the 2008 election tsunami.

Gerakan and MCA were trounced in their worst defeats ever in that election, losing all their seats in Penang and paving the way for Pakatan Rakyat to take over.

"Rationally, the suggestion should be seen as holistic, in order for Umno to continue to win more seats in Penang," Rahmad said.

It is speculated that Koh, who is Gerakan president, will announce tomorrow the person who will succeed him as Penang BN chairperson, a post he has held for 18 years.

Koh indicated recently that he was willing to pass the state leadership to a person acceptable to all coalition partners.

His delay in naming the person has fuelled speculation that he was being pressured by Umno on whom to pick. Umno is said to be pushing for Koh's political secretary and Penang Gerakan vice-chairperson, Ong Thean Lye (above, right).

Penang Gerakan chief Dr Teng Hock Nan has vehemently denied that Umno is behind Koh's perceived indecisiveness, adding that BN practises consultation among its partners.

Koh reportedly prefers to hand over the leadership to party secretary-general Teng Chang Yeow (left), with whom he is said to have met twice to discuss the takeover.