

**Penang CM blames Umno for Koh's decision**  
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**by S Pathmawathy**

Umno orchestrated Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon's decision to not contest in the next general election, says Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, who also expresses "pity" for his predecessor.

"I feel it's not his (Koh's) wish... Otherwise he wouldn't have stayed on as Gerakan's president (after losing in the 2008 general election) and accepted a ministerial post," said Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general.

"Umno gets what Umno wants... that's how it is. They dictate the terms," said Lim.

Umno had "accomplished in its mission" to oust Koh over an apparent smear campaign in order to remove him from power, he said.

Asked whether he preferred that Koh contests in the coming general election, Lim told reporters in the Parliament lobby that his preference was not the crux of the issue.

"I just don't like the way he was pushed out... the way he was hounded. I only feel sympathy for him because I have received this kind of a treatment before," said the Bagan MP, referring to personal attacks by pro-Umno bloggers on his son for allegedly groping a classmate.

This morning, Koh announced his intention not to contest in the 13th general election, indicating that he wished to "lead by example".

'Live to fight for another day'

However, as for the other posts he holds, including the leadership of the Penang BN and the cabinet position, Koh said it was up to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to decide.

Lim said Koh should be given another opportunity at the ballot box as his defeat in the 2008 general election was his first.

"As it is often said, 'live to fight another day'... but he clearly had no choice and was forced to step back," Lim added.

He cited the 1999 general election where DAP stalwarts including Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh were wiped out, but they won again in the next election.

The BN led by Gerakan lost Penang in 2008, allowing Pakatan Rakyat to take over, with DAP leading the charge.

Lim was appointed chief minister, while Koh was later appointed as a senator and then made minister in charge of national unity in Najib's cabinet.