

**Dr M says Koh should quit as Gerakan head**  
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**by Hafiz Yatim**

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on Dr Koh Tsu Koon to step down as Gerakan president for failing to lead his party properly.

Speaking to reporters today after a function in Kuala Lumpur, Mahathir said a leader must step down after making a major failure, as Abdullah Ahmad Badawi did as BN chief after the 2008 general elections.

"I am sorry to say this about Koh. Personally he is a very nice man but he has failed in his duty. Gerakan has failed as a result of this.

"If he is to lead Gerakan in the election then it may not bring the desired impact for BN. He has been there too long and is not effective and hence, he should resign," he said.

Mahathir (right) said Koh is seen as a liability to Gerakan and BN and should immediately give way to others.

Possibly, he said Koh has become disillusioned as he had been appointed as a minister.

"He has not shown the kind of leadership required in heading Gerakan and therefore he should give way," he said.

The former premier said the opportunity should be given to other Gerakan members as the party has other capable leaders.

The former premier was asked about Koh's decision not to contest for any parliamentary and state seats.

He told this to reporters after officially opening the 'War is a Crime' exhibition held at Jalan Perdana. The event is a run-up for a tribunal against former United States president George Bush and former British prime minister Tony Blair for misleading their public and populations to invade Iraq.

Mahathir said in Malaysian culture, it was unfortunate that party leaders and ministers do not resign or take responsibility when something bad happens and instead overstay.

He suggested that Malaysia should instead adopt Japanese culture of governance, which sees cabinet ministers resigning immediately after a major scandal.

"We should not overstay. That is why I resigned as I do not want to overstay my tenure as premiership and give Pak Lah a chance to show his capability.

"If not nobody will know his (Pak Lah's) credibility," he quipped.

Mahathir said he stood on to lead BN to victory in every general election during his 22 year premiership and with a two-thirds majority.

"I won every election with two-thirds majority and you cannot say that I had failed," he said.

'I will testify in Liong Sik's trial'

Mahathir, when asked whether he will testify in former transport minister Dr Ling Liong Sik's trial, the former premier said he will come if called.

"He is accused of not telling the truth to the cabinet. At that time I chaired most of the cabinet meetings.

So I will give my views if he indeed told lies. I will give my views if called," he said.

Asked whether he is giving an undertaking to come, Mahathir said, yes, of course if they call I will come.

Yesterday Ling's lawyer Wong Kian Kheong informed the court that the defence intended to interview 12 witnesses including Mahathir, Abdullah and current premier Najib Abdul Razak.

The present ministers to also be called are Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, Information, Communications and Culture Minister Rais Yatim and Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Bernard Dompok.

The others are former energy and telecommunications minister Leo Moggie, former education minister Musa Mohamad, former tourism minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, former energy, water and communications Minister Lim Keng Yaik and former minister in the Prime Minister's Department Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin.

The only non-minister in the line-up is the then-special economic adviser to the then-PM, Ali Abul Hassan.

Mahathir hopes the tribunal against Bush and Blair would create awareness that going to war is wrong and misleading the public is wrong.

He said politicians should take it upon themselves to make a pledge not to go to war.

"Voters themselves should send a clear message that they would not want to elect politicians who prefer conflicts at the expense of innocent people," he said, adding that he was still sore that Malaysia did invite Blair to talk here twice.

The four-day tribunal is to hear war crimes charges against Bush and Blair where they are charged with planning, preparing and invading Iraq on March 19, 2002. They are also charged with torture and war crimes for issuing the executive orders to invade Iraq.

The seven-member tribunal is headed by retired Federal Court judge Abdul Kadir Sulaiman.

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