

**Zahid hopes 1998 Umno crisis won't repeat**  
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Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi hopes the 1998 crisis in Umno will not repeat itself following the removal of Muhyiddin Yassin and Shafie Apdal from the cabinet by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"The situation may not be worse than 1998.

"Many have forgotten what had happened in 1998, when we had to go through many hardships," he said as reported by Oriental Daily today.

Zahid was referring to a year when former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad sacked the then deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Asked whether he had encountered any problems after taking over from Muhyiddin (photo) who was seen as a leader with integrity, he said, in Islam, a person will be bestowed with a chance by Allah when that person fights sincerely for the interest of the majority.

"Positions come and go. I may hold the post today, but I don't know what will happen next year or next moment. No matter what post we hold, we must be consistent," he said.

**Still respects Muhyiddin**

Zahid said he still respects Muhyiddin as his predecessor is still an Umno deputy president.

Shafie (photo), an Umno vice-president from Sabah, was the rural and regional development minister.

"Back in Umno Youth era, we fought together. His contribution can not be wiped away," he stressed, adding that he contacted Muhyiddin twice after the latter's removal.

However, the Umno vice-president said he disagreed with Muhyiddin's speech that the party will be defeated if general elections were held soon.

If Muhyiddin is sincere, he should help the party to grow stronger instead of making inappropriate remarks, said the Bagan Datoh MP.

Zahid denied that he has ambition of becoming a prime minister, saying he only wanted to assist his boss.

In another matter, the newly-minted deputy prime minister admitted that it was a challenge for them to explain the allegation surrounding 1MDB and the RM2.6 billion deposited into Najib's private bank account.

"In the past, the controversial issues can be dealt with easily as information only spread via traditional media. Now, the internet is open to everyone with the emergence of the social media," Zahid said, adding that he would explain the matter to the public.

When asked how he can help to mediate between Najib and his biggest critic Mahathir (photo), Zahid did not provide a direct answer.

"As Malaysians, nobody should destroy the country," he said.

Zahid also brushed off the possibility of Najib being washed away by a "Malay tsunami".

"Those who talked about this term are over-confident in thinking they may obtain the majority support. But in my opinion, these people succeeded due to hate culture," he said, responding to a remark by former information minister Zainuddin Maidin.

Zahid said the BN is expected to face 5 million new voters in the next general elections and the ruling coalition needs to work hard to woo their support.

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