

Zahid: My job is to defend gov't, help Najib
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Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said that he as the number two in the government is responsible for defending the "leadership institution" and to assist Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

And as one of the three vice-presidents of Umno, he realises that he and his colleagues must jointly defend the presidency and "empower the support of the people for the party".

"Whether the arrangement is written or not, the duty of the number two is to help in the functions of the number one. I will do my best to discharge my responsibilities and will not exceed the role given to me," he said today.

He was commenting on the responsibilities that he has assumed since being appointed deputy prime minister on July 28, replacing Muhyiddin Yassin, who remains Umno deputy president.

Muhyiddin has been critical of the leadership of Najib, especially in relation to 1MDB and the RM2.6 billion donation deposited in the prime minister's personal bank account.

Ahmad Zahid said that as one of the three vice-presidents, he had not only to strive to strengthen the party, but also defend its leadership institution.

The other two vice-presidents are Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein and former Rural and Regional Development Minister Mohd Shafie Apdal.

Ahmad Zahid was speaking in an interview with Bernama editors led by Deputy Editor-in-Chief (Domestic News Service) Mokhtar Hussain here.

He said Umno had to be "solid" to "empower the people's support" for the party, which remains their hope for realising the Malay and Islamic agenda.

Asked about the message that should be put across at the Umno General Assembly, he said priority should be given to unity, without any need for such action as having "a conference within a conference".

Ahmad Zahid said the leadership of every dynamic party would face problems, and these must be resolved whether they were big or small.

He said that when a leader was no longer in the seat of power he should still be with the leadership in strengthening the party, even if he held different views on various issues.

- Bernama.

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