

Mahathir now patron of Umno rebel group GKCM

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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been declared as the official patron of the movement of Umno grassroots leadership calling for party president Najib Abdul Razak's ouster.

According to Gerakan Ketua Cawangan Malaysia (GKCM), this took place earlier this evening after representatives from the group met with the veteran Umno leader at the ex-premier's office at Yayasan Al Bukhari in Kuala Lumpur.

"Mahathir has officially declared that he will be the patron of GKCM and will take part in future programs to be organised by the group," it said in a statement.

The group said that Mahathir expressed his worry that Umno is facing a dearth of intellectuals but was happy that groups like GKCM exist to balance the rot in the party.

GKCM also said the ex-premier hoped the group can help address the trust deficit among party members and the public towards Umno, which is now facing a leadership crisis.

The group, composed of disenchanted Umno branch leaders, have spoken out against Najib and has called for his resignation.

Yesterday, they have announced that they are working to pass resolutions at the branch level asking for Najib to step down as party president and for delayed party polls to be brought forward.

Party secretary-general Tengku Adnan Mansor, however, has dismissed them as "shit-stirrers".

While they believe that their efforts will be blocked once it reach the divisions, they are hoping that some will get through as this is their only means of redress via party channels.

The group is representative of the growing unease with Najib's leadership within the Malay party.

However, these critics' days may be numbered, as many others who spoke out against the president - from ministers to MBs and grassroots leaders - have been purged or sidelined from the party.

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