

Zahid wants Umno's 'acting deputy president' post made official

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Umno acting deputy president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said he would propose amendments to the party constitution to make his post official.

He said that although there had been three occasions where a party deputy president is removed from office, the Umno constitution is silent on what to do in the circumstance.

This is despite that, in practice, one of Umno's three vice-presidents would be appointed as acting deputy president if there is a casual vacancy in the Umno deputy presidency.

"It is an acknowledgement. For example when I had resigned as the youth chief, it was taken over by the acting youth chief who was Hishammuddin Hussein at the time.

"In the constitution, the term 'acting youth chief' is there, but the term 'acting deputy president' does not exist. So it should be made consistent," he told reporters today after the closing ceremony of Ummah Agenda Empowerment Convention in Kuala Lumpur today.

He said he would bring the matter up for approval in a management meeting, and then in a supreme council meeting, so that an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) can be held to table the proposed constitutional amendment.

Asked why he raised the matter while still holding the post, he replied, "Who knows one day Hishammuddin might need to perform the role of a deputy president. I am looking after his interests, too," before both he and Hishammuddin burst into laughter.

Hishammuddin, who is now an Umno vice-president, was present during the press conference.

Zahid assumed the acting deputy president post after the incumbent Muhyiddin Yassin was suspended from his post in February. Muhyiddin later left the party to set up Parti Pribumi Bersatu.

Previously when Anwar Ibrahim who was Umno deputy president at the time, was sacked in 1998, he was replaced by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who was then an Umno vice-president.

In 2003 when the then-Umno president Dr Mahathir Mohamad resigned, the deputy presidency was left vacant when the incumbent Abdullah was appointed as acting president.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, who was vice-president at the time, was appointed as acting deputy president to fill the vacancy.

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