

Mahathir refuses to pick political sides, insists on National Recovery Council

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Dr Mahathir Mohamad has refused to pledge his newly-registered party Pejuang's support for any political faction amid a tussle for power in Putrajaya.

Instead, he said his party is determined to push for a National Recovery Council to be formed and to manage the country's Covid-19 response.

In a virtual press conference today, the former prime minister repeatedly stressed a lack of interest in politicking when asked whether he would align Pejuang with Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to ensure political stability or even step in as an interim prime minister.

“We are only interested in helping the people at this moment. We are not interested in taking political sides.

“We are not interested in whether we support the government or not or if there's

a change of government. None of these will help,” the Pejuang chairperson said.

Muhyiddin’s government is in danger of collapsing after the Umno supreme council decided to withdraw its support from the prime minister.

Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi cited the government’s failure to contain the Covid-19 pandemic as one of the reasons why Umno would no longer support Muhyiddin.

Malaysia - which has been grappling with the arrival of the deadly Delta variant of Covid-19 - reported 8,868 new cases today. It is the tenth day in a row that new cases have been over the 6,000 mark.

Mahathir said he believes the solution to the problem is a National Recovery Council for which Pejuang plans to submit a motion on in the upcoming Parliament session.

“We propose that a National Recovery Council be formed. This council will take specific actions, that we have already drafted, to combat the Covid-19 crisis.

“These actions will include measures to decrease the number of new cases.

“We are confident that with these measures, we will be able to reduce the number of new cases which in turn will reduce the stress and depression faced by the rakyat,” he said.

The former prime minister said the proposed council will consist of professionals who “understand” the Covid-19 crisis, adding that psychiatrists and sociologists would also be brought in to express their views.

Asked who would head the council, the former prime minister replied: “Someone qualified, with experience”. He declined to say if he had anyone in mind.

Mahathir made a similar proposal last month when he suggested that a National Operation Council (NOC)-style government, similar to the one established after the May 13 riots, be formed to guide the country through the pandemic.

He had said the proposed NOC-style government would be scrutinised by the Parliament but could not be brought down by politicians.

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