

But he has no plans to step down: aide
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 09, 2008

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has no plans to resign, his spokesman said today, despite leading the ruling coalition to its worst ever election results. MCPX

abdullah ahmad badawi polling day vote 080308 06 "He has no intention to step down," the premier's spokesman Kamal Khalid told AFP, although he admitted the premier was "surprised" by the scale of the setback.

"He has actually received quite a lot of support from senior party leaders and he is still on track to be sworn in tomorrow," he added.

Abdullah is facing growing calls to quit after the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition lost its two-thirds majority in parliament for the first time since 1969 and conceded four states to the resurgent opposition.

"The PM was surprised by the losses on Saturday, but having said that, although the government has not received a two-thirds majority, it was very close and the BN can still form the government," his spokesman insisted.

Umno leaders pledge support

Meanwhile, senior Umno leaders have gathered at Abdullah's official residence in Putrajaya to pledge their support for him.

However Abdullah was savaged by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who handed over to Abdullah in 2003 after two decades leading Umno which dominates the coalition.

"My view is he has destroyed Umno, destroyed the BN and he has been responsible for this," Mahathir told reporters.

He suggested Abdullah should resign, and admitted he had made a mistake in selecting him as prime minister.

"I think he should accept responsibility for this. He should accept 100 percent responsibility," he said. "I am sorry but I apparently made the wrong choice."