

Khir, Mukhriz to contest Umno Youth chief
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One day after Hishammuddin Hussein said that he would not be defending his Umno Youth chief post, two party leaders have expressed their intention to contest for the coveted post. MCPX

Former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo and Umno Youth exco member Mukhriz Mahathir have both confirmed that they would be vying for the post in the December party polls.

khir toyo interview 121207 asuredKhir (left), also Umno supreme council member, had earlier strongly hinted that he would go for top post in the party's Youth wing.

"If I have enough support, I will definitely contest," Khir said today.

"I am only 43 years old and with my experience as a menteri besar, supreme council member and also in the Youth movement, I think I can provide a new dimension to the Youth wing in handling current political problems," he added.

mukhriz mahathir hari raya open house 091106 sniggerMeanwhile, Mukhriz (right), who is son of ex-premier Mahathir Mohamad, said he decided to contest the post after receiving positive feedback from the party grassroots.

"I welcome challenges. We should allow as many Umno Youth members to offer themselves to lead the movement and to contest for other posts," said Mukhriz in Kedah earlier today.

"I hope the party elections in December will give members room to offer themselves for any posts to help Umno," he said.

It is now left to see if Hishammuddin's deputy Khairy Jamaluddin, who is embattled Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's son-in-law, will also be standing for the top post.

Both Mukhriz and Khairy are first-time parliamentarians winning in Jerlun (Kedah) and Rembau (Negri Sembilan) respectively, while Khir retained his Selangor state seat of Sungai Panjang in last month's general election.

Khir however resigned as state party chief after Selangor, which he had led for eight years as menteri besar, fell to the opposition. Nevertheless, he has assumed the position of state opposition leader.

Distancing himself from Khairy

hishammuddin hussein pc 030408 03Yesterday, Hishammuddin (left) announced at a press conference that he would not be defending the post which he has held since 2000.

He told reporters that he was stating his intention early so that others may vie for the seat in December, but stressed that he would not be endorsing any candidate.

"I'm not directly or indirectly supporting anyone. We'll let the delegates decide."

He also appeared to have distanced himself from supporting Khairy in succeeding him.

"It's not for me to decide. I can only decide for myself and that is the issue for the Youth wing to look at in order to move forward".

He also denied that it was a tradition for the deputy to take over the chief's place when a vacancy arises.

He also refused to confirm if he would be contesting for one of the three vice-president posts, stating that he was leaving it to party members and delegates.

Khairy awaits sign from grassroots

khairy jamaluddin interview 011107 poised Meanwhile, Khairy (right) was quoted by Bernama today as saying that he would leave it to the movement's grassroots to determine whether he should contest for the top seat.

"As the Umno Youth vice chief, I represent an institution and because of this, I cannot make any hasty decisions at my personal will."

On the decision by both Khir and Mukhriz to succeed Hishammuddin, Khairy said he respected anyone's decision to contest for the Umno Youth chief's post.

"What is important is democracy is respected and practised in our party because through a democratic process, we, God willing, will be able to produce the best leaders to lead Umno.

"I hope anyone who offers himself to contest for a post in the youth movement is able to unify and put party solidarity as the main agenda," he added.

He also said that he would back Hishammuddin to contest for "any post he feels is suitable at the December party elections".