

Hishammuddin: No need for me to step down
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Fauwaz Abdul Aziz

Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein today said his apology for brandishing the MCPX keris during the party annual general meetings is sufficient and there is no need for him to step down.

parliament 2008 first day 280408 02 "It is important that when we say we put the party and the (party) struggle and the state of our people above our own selves and individual interests, when what we do threatens the party and the struggle, than the said individual has to take responsibility.

"I have done just that. Not more, not less," he told reporters when met at the Parliament lobby after the swearing in ceremony of the new MPs.

Hishammuddin, who is also education minister, was commenting on the call by Umno leaders in Johor for him to resign over the adverse effects of the keris incident on Barisan Nasional's performance in the recent elections.

Sorry no cure

Influential local leader Kadar Shah Tun Sulaiman Ninam Shah Kadar Shah was quoted as saying that about 90 branch and 25 divisional leaders made the call yesterday after Hishammuddin had admitted that the issue was among the causes of BN's poor performance in the March 8 polls.

Kadar Shah said Hishammuddin's admission and apology were not enough and he should resign from all party and government posts.

Kadar Shah said that having a been a cabinet minister for several terms, Hishammuddin should have known that brandishing the keris could hurt the feelings of other races.

Hishammuddin has been indulging in the keris-wielding act for the past three Umno annual meets.

Good response

Hishammuddin, however, said that the response to his apology "has been good" and that the apology itself was done in the hope that the matter could be laid to rest.

umno 2007 pemuda keris 061107 group The keris-wielding was never intended to intimidate non-Malay communities, he added.

"I hope that we can go forward (from here)," he said.

Hishammuddin also said that the issue should not have a bearing on the keris as a Malay symbol as a whole, because the controversy centers only around the 'keris panca warisan'

that belongs to the Umno Youth movement.

"It has nothing to do with the keris warisan Melayu, which I see is still preserved and is still a reflection of the Malay heritage and identity."

Asked whether the practice of lifting the keris and kissing it would be scrapped, Hishamuddin said this would have to be discussed with members of the Umno Youth movement.

"From the feedback that I got, they know me very well and they know why I did it, and I will raise it (the issue) with them," he said.

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