

**Ku Li to stay to initiate reforms**  
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**Athi Veerangan**

While Gua Musang member of Parliament Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah was shocked over Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision to quit party, he will nevertheless not emulate his former political adversary's move to leave.  
MCPX

But former Umno vice-president Razaleigh, who is popularly known as just Ku Li, suggested that former premier and ex-party president Mahathir's decision to quit could be "his last resort to wake up the sleeping Umno leaders and members to change the party leadership, system and political governance".

tengku razaleigh forum 260408 ku li speakingThe Kelantan prince warned the present party leadership, led by president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, that Mahathir's resignation could well trigger a spate of resignations of party leaders and members throughout the country.

"I am shocked as well as anybody. Perhaps he decided to quit to send an ultimatum to Umno leaders and members that the leadership has to change.

"His decision to quit the party showed he was upset and angry," Razaleigh told journalists after speaking a forum organised by the Kedah Malays Solidarity Organisation in Alor Star today.

Mahathir sent shock waves to the country's political circles this morning when he made his announcement to quit Umno a few hours ago in a nearby hotel in Alor Star.

Razaleigh, who lost narrowly to Mahathir in a bitter Umno presidential election in 1987, said that he would remain in the party to initiate changes.

"I will exhaust all ways and means to bring about the desired changes in the party.

"When and if I felt I had failed in my effort, then I would make up my mind on it (decision to quit or not)," he said.

**Mahathir's tragic, bold step**

Razaleigh has previously expressed his willingness to challenge Abdullah for the presidency in the party's December poll to "heal the party" in the aftermath of its worst ever general election performance.

Many, including Razaleigh and Mahathir, have blamed Abdullah for the bad performance in the March 8 polls.

When pressed on whether he would emulate Mahathir, he quipped: "I won't quit Umno."

Razaleigh suggested that Mahathir "may be fed up" with the Umno members' apathy and lukewarm response to his calls to change the party leadership, starting with the ouster of Abdullah as Prime Minister and party president.

Former Umno MP for Padang Terap, Affifuddin Omar, who was also present at the same function, described Mahathir's decision as "equally shocking and courageous."

"He has taken a bold step to quit the party with a condition to return if Abdullah was to leave.

"That could or could not encourage many party members to follow suit," he told Malaysiakini.

Describing it as 'tragic' to Umno, Kedah's Pokok Sena Umno Division secretary Ramli Mohd Yunus however, argued that Mahathir had made a grave mistake by quitting the party in haste.

"He now had lost his locus standi to initiate leadership changes by quitting.

"If this was his war tactic, the former premier had made his enemies happy," he said, while expressing his shock over Mahathir's decision.

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