

Umno leaders call on PM to quit
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi faced calls to quit from within Umno after opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim scored a landslide by-election victory.
MCPX

abdullah ahmad badawi pak lah angry anwar lookAnwar won the vote to return to parliament despite an intense campaign mounted by the Barisan Nasional, which he has promised to unseat within a month with the help of defecting lawmakers.

The failure to check Anwar has heaped more pressure on Abdullah, who has fought to hold on to his job since the March general election in which the opposition gained unprecedented ground.

Veteran Umno leader Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah called for a new leadership "to unite our people... and forge a clear national direction."

"(Abdullah) does not have the minimal credibility needed to run the country day by day, let alone to take it in the new directions we need to go in a complex world," he said. "This dangerous situation cannot continue."

tengku razaleighRazaleigh said the coalition's by-election campaign, which was criticised for its racial overtones and focus on sodomy allegations against Anwar, has "embarrassed and divided the nation with its ugliness."

"It is time to face the music: it is we who have been buried," he said.

umno special briefing abdullah ahmad badawi announce resignation date 100708 2"Our leadership is rejected by the rakyat and, moreover, is rejected by our own members. BN's vote count was less than the number of Umno members in the constituency.

"Within and among our component parties we ran a poorly coordinated and listless campaign against a motivated opposition.

"What scraps of credibility the prime minister and his deputy had left after March 8 are gone," he added.

Wave cannot be stopped

Razaleigh also called on Umno members and BN component parties to stand by Umno in 'our hour of crisis'.

"The people of Malaysia and along with them, Umno's ordinary members, have found their democratic voice," he said, warning that the wave cannot be stopped.

Razaleigh plans to challenge Abdullah for the party leadership in the Umno polls this December, but is likely to fail after the premier silenced calls for his immediate ouster by agreeing to hand over power to his deputy Najib Abdul Razak in 2010.

Abdullah's main critic, former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad, has also called for the resignation of his successor after relations between the two soured in 2006.

mukhriz mahathir 290508Mahathir's son Mukhriz, another senior Umno figure, who is vying for the top spot in the party's influential youth wing, also called for Abdullah's immediate resignation.

"I think Abdullah should strongly consider for all our sakes, to step down now," he told AFP.

"This is a second time that the Malaysian people have given a clear message, with the first at the general elections. It is a rejection of the present leader and he must leave now."

Anwar won the Permatang Pauh parliamentary seat after defeating BN's Arif Shah Omar Shah with a majority of 15,671 votes.

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