

**Confirmed: Mukhriz goes for Umno Youth chief**  
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**Beh Lih Yi & Abdul Rahim Sabri**

Umno Youth leader Mukhriz Mahathir has confirmed that he will contest for the wing's top post in the coming party polls in December.

mukhriz mahathir gaza fund 010208 talkingThe Jerlun MP is scheduled to make the much-awaited announcement at a press conference in Alor Star, Kedah, on Saturday, according to a press advisory sent out by his aide today.

The youngest son of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be the first Umno Youth leader to reveal that he is vying for the top post.

Others leaders believed to be eyeing the post are Umno Youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin, former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo and Pahang Menteri Besar Adnan Yaakob.

Except for Khir, the other two have not confirmed their candidacy.

Incumbent Hishammuddin Hussein has said that he would not defend the post.

Mukhriz could not be reached for comment.

### **Support from Kedah**

In an immediate response, several Umno division leaders in Kedah expressed support for Mukhriz.

Contacted later, the leaders said they were happy with Mukhriz's decision to vie for the Umno Youth chief post.

mukhriz mahathir umno pc 200508 05Jerlun division Youth chief Mohd Zulfekri Awang said Kedah needs young and capable leaders to spearhead the wing at the state and federal levels.

"Mukhriz can boost the Youth's image in Kedah," he stressed, calling on the state's Umno Youth members to throw their support behind Mukhriz.

He added that Mukhriz is the only Umno Youth leader courageous enough to speak out against the leadership of Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Asked if he could win, Zulfekri said: "Each person has his own way and strategies. It is up to the delegates to decide."

### **Expect stiff competition**

Meanwhile, Merbok Umno Youth chief Abd Karim Ali said Mukhriz has a track record of being a bold politician who is willing to state the truth for the good of the party and Malays.

"Merbok Umno Youth fully supports Mukhriz's decision to contest," he told Malaysiakini.

"We in Merbok want a leader who is brave and stern in order to lead the Malays forward for another 50 years," he said.

On that note, he also welcomed the intention of other leaders to contest for the Umno Youth chief post.

"This proves that democracy exists in Umno. The delegates will decide who is qualified for the post," he said.

Former Umno Pendang Youth chief Basiron Said believes that Mukhriz would be able to garner support from the Umno Youth leadership.

He added that the Jerlun MP would also receive the backing of those disappointed with Abdullah's leadership and the transition of power plan.

However, he pointed out that Mukhriz would face stiff competition in the race should Kahiry decide to contest.

Basiron also did not rule out the influence of Adnan dan Khir.

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