

**Penang Gerakan severs ties with state Umno**  
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Penang Gerakan held an emergency meeting this evening in the wake of the unruly press conference by the state Umno earlier today where a

party leader tore a photo of former chief minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

"At the emergency meeting of the Gerakan Penang state liaison committee tonight, it was resolved that Gerakan Penang will sever ties with Umno Penang," said Koh, who is the party's acting president and the state Barisan Nasional chief.

pinang umno tear up koh tsu koon photo 080908 02He ticked off Ahmad Ismail, the Bukit Bendera Umno chief who had allegedly made disparaging remarks against Chinese Malaysians, of turning a "personal mistake into a conflict and crisis among BN component parties and worst still, amongst communities".

"The action of his supporters to take down, tear and step on my photograph was seen and felt not only as an act of disrespect and humiliation to me personally, but also to the whole party and BN."

Koh, in a hastily-organised press conference at 10.30pm tonight, said that Gerakan leaders and members "are all very shocked and angry".

"We are also extremely disappointed and saddened by the fact that many Umno Penang state liaison committee leaders were present and condoned such irresponsible and insensitive statement and behaviour."

**Koh: Stay calm, don't hold protests**

Koh described Ahmad's warning that the Chinese community not to behave like Jews in America in wanting to control both the economy and political power as "totally irresponsible and uncalled for".

pinang umno tear up koh tsu koon photo 080908 zainol abidin hashim"Such words and behaviour have angered many right-thinking Malaysians. We also received feedback that members of the public, especially from the Chinese community, were feeling humiliated as well."

However, the former chief minister urged the minority Chinese community not to organise protests over the matter.

"While people can express their views in words, we urge them to stay calm and refrain from any demonstration or physical act of expression. We must maintain peace and order at all times."

He said that Gerakan will lodge further police reports against Ahmad.

"In view of such serious transgressions, Penang Gerakan will lodge police reports against Ahmad Ismail and his supporters. We urge the authorities, BN and Umno to take firm and

harsh action (against Ahmad)."

As the row further escalated today, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi - who is head of Penang Umno - and his deputy, Najib Razak, are expected to meet Ahmad tomorrow.

The BN will also be holding its supreme council meeting in the afternoon tomorrow in which the issue is expected to be hotly debated.

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