

THE STAR

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# Mukhriz let off the hook

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## Umno Youth decides not to take action

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Umno Youth has unanimously decided not to take action against Jerlun MP Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir for calling on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to step down.

Its chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the movement made the decision after Mukhriz explained that his call was made in his personal letter to the Prime Minister.

The letter, which was sent to several Umno leaders, was later leaked to the public.

"If the Prime Minister leaves it to us to settle the matter, we will not take any action against him.

"At this juncture, we want to move forward. It is one of the hundreds or thousands of issues that we are facing. We will take it as a lesson for us to rebuild the party," he told reporters after the movement's special exco meeting to discuss the general election post mortem at Menara Datuk Onn here yesterday.

On whether the letter was damaging to the Prime Minister, he said it was because of the way it was brought out in the open.

"Mukhriz has explained that it was not he who made it public. We gave him the benefit of the doubt.

"What's important was that it was not him who made it public. It was reflecting the voice on the ground. We are more than willing to listen."

Mukhriz expressed his relief about the decision saying that he was happy that there was

space in the movement to agree to disagree on some issues.

Asked whether he would retract his call to the Prime Minister to step down, Mukhriz said:

"I have my own opinion about that. I've made my stand quite clearly before. I will not change my mind."

On who had possibly made the letter public, he said: "I am not sure. What's certain is that I've explained to the movement that it was not me."

Asked whether the movement did not dare take action against Mukhriz in view of Barisan Nasional's setback in the general election, Umno Youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin said the question did not arise but that there were more pressing matters.

"Mukhriz has stated his position. He has written a private letter, which was leaked, and the majority of the members of the meeting just now conveyed the message.

"In a nutshell we said it was wrong the way it was done but we have to move forward. We cannot just be stuck in this problem. Our main challenge in front of us is the Opposition, not Mukhriz," said Khairy.

On Mukhriz refusing to retract the letter and claim that the view was not only his but also that of certain other leaders, Khairy said:

"Well that's his view. Let him have his view. We'll have to move on. We cannot get stuck in this because it's counterproductive."