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Muhyiddin: I stand by my principle

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I have principles and my own stand in defending the rakyat's rights'

by AYU MUSA KAMAL

TAN Sri Muhyiddin Yassin who has been critical of the 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) issue said he stands by his principle of "defending the rakyat's rights" pertaining to the troubled state's fund.

"During my tenure, I had always supported all government policies and supported the prime minister's leadership.

"Except for the 1MDB issue, I have principles and my own stand in defending the rakyat's rights, the party's good name and the country's wellbeing. If my stand on this issue has led to me being dropped so be it," said Muhyiddin in a statement after he was sacked as the deputy prime minister (DPM) in a Cabinet reshuffle yesterday.

Muhyiddin, who is also an Umno deputy president, said it was the PM's prerogative to decide his Cabinet line-up.

"I accept the prime minister's decision to drop me from the Cabinet with an open heart. I respect the PM's prerogative to elect and remove any Cabinet members."

Muhyiddin, who also ceased

to be the education minister, said as the DPM, he was directly involved in the policy-making and had executed his duties with honesty.

He thanked Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak for giving him the opportunity to serve in the public sector as the DPM since April 10, 2009.

Muhyiddin also thanked all the heads of departments, civil servants, non-governmental organisation leaders and all parties that had supported him throughout his time as DPM. The Pagoh MP also promised to stay loyal to Umno.

"As Umno's deputy president, I will continue to perform my duties which have been entrusted to me and I will give my all to work for the party and to help bring back the faith of the Malays and the rakyat towards Umno," he said.

Muhyiddin's removal came two days after he broke his silence over the 1MDB scandal at the Cheras Umno divisional meeting on Sunday evening.

He was reported as saying that the PM himself should personally take the lead to explain the issue to the people.

"Don't underestimate the people, we cannot lie, when the second finance minister explains on 1MDB, the critics rebut him and when the housing minister speaks, he is also rebutted.

"We cannot explain properly because even we don't know the real facts, so who is going to tell us the real facts, it should be the PM, true or not," Muhyiddin was quoted as saying.

Rumours over his removal have been circling for months after a video of him calling for the sacking of 1MDB's directors at an Umno gathering was leaked in May.

He told a press conference in Parliament later that he had shared his opinion at a closed-door meeting and that it was done to help his peers understand the situation better.

"To me, I shared those views with my fellow political leaders so that they could understand better," he was quoted as saying.

Muhyiddin was the menteri besar of Johor from 1986 to 1995 before being transferred to the federal administration as minister of Youth and Sports.

He was also the minister of domestic trade, cooperative and consumerism, minister of agriculture and agro-based industry and minister of international trade and industry.

He was appointed as DPM and education minister in 2009.

Meanwhile, the Umno Supreme Council is expected to meet this Friday and observers will be watching the outcome of the meeting and Muhyiddin's role in the party.