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# Dr M quits Umno for second time

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**VOCAL CRITIC:** This comes after failed bid to oust Najib

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**F**ORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday quit Umno, the party he once led, for the second time in eight years.

In an immediate reaction, Umno leaders said the move was not unexpected after the outspoken Dr Mahathir failed in his bid to unseat Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak after months of unrelenting attacks.

Dr Mahathir cited his loss of confidence in the party's top leadership, saying that the Umno he once helmed was no longer what it used to be. And he then threw support for the opposition, including the DAP, in wanting to remove Najib as prime minister, and said he would form a core group to meet his goal.

Umno information chief Tan Sri Annuar Musa said Dr Mahathir's bid to influence other Umno leaders to join his anti-Najib campaign would prove futile. He added that by quitting Umno, Dr Mahathir assumed that he could cripple Umno.

"This is a last resort to defeat Najib," Annuar said.

Dr Mahathir said his wife, Tun Dr



Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad announcing his decision to leave Umno at a press conference at the Perdana Leadership Foundation in Putrajaya yesterday. Pic by Mohd Fadli Hamzah

Siti Hasmah Mohamad Aji, would also leave Umno.

This will be the second time Dr Mahathir, who has been vocal in criticising Najib's handling of the 1Malaysia Development Bhd and the RM2.6 billion political donation issues, has quit Umno.

The first time was in May 2008, when he was unhappy with then

prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's handling of the general election that year. He rejoined the party on April 4, 2009, a day after Najib became prime minister.

Dr Mahathir said current policies were only intended at ensuring Najib remained as prime minister and that this had affected the country's economy.

"Malaysia's image has also deteriorated so much that it is now considered one of the 10 most corrupt countries in the world.

"I am very much ashamed of what has happened. Therefore, I cannot be a part of all of those things. The least I can do is to leave the party."

He denied suggestions that his decision to quit the party had anything

to do with the removal of his son, Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, as Kedah menteri besar.

"If I wanted my son to be a prime minister, I would have promoted him during my time as prime minister. But Mukhriz only joined politics after I resigned," he said, adding that he did not practise nepotism.

Dr Mahathir said he was glad that he finally made up his mind to quit the party as he had tried to find excuses to remain in Umno.

He added that he did not want to be associated with Umno any more after the party decided to suspend Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on Friday. He made it clear that he would not be forming a new party, nor would he join another.

"Although there have been many requests for me to form a new party, I don't think it's a good idea as it will result in more splits. Some will follow, some will not ... then the party will become weak."

Dr Mahathir said he would submit a formal letter to leave the party to the Umno secretary-general soon, adding that he would return if the party was "revived".

On his participation in the Bersih rally in August last year, he said it was only because he agreed with one of its objectives, that was to get rid of Najib, although he disagreed with the other demands made.

He said that he would join the March 27 rally initiated by former law minister Datuk Zaid Ibrahim, if he was invited, as a form of protest against the government.