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Mahathir quits Umno, again

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PUTRAJAYA: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (pix) yesterday quit Umno, for the second time in eight years.

Claiming that Umno today is only about supporting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, Mahathir said he has become "ashamed" and "embarrassed" to be associated with the party.

Mahathir said he would consider rejoining the party only if Najib is no longer in power. "If Umno is revived, then yes, but at the moment, there is no Umno," he told a press conference yesterday at the Perdana Leadership Foundation.

Stressing that he cannot speak on behalf of his sons, Mahathir said his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali was quitting Umno with him.

He was quick to add that his decision was not due to the sacking of Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir as Kedah menteri besar.

"Some say I'm disappointed because my son is not PM. If I wanted him to be PM, I would have promoted him when I was PM. I don't practise nepotism," he said.

Asked if suspended deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin would also quit the party, Mahathir said: "I hope so!"



Mahathir ruled out setting up a new party or joining any other party although he admitted that there were such requests.

"I'm still Umno at heart ... (and) I dislike starting new parties because there will be more splits - some will follow and some won't," he said.

This is the second time Mahathir has quit Umno; the last was in May 2008 during the tenure of his successor, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, but rejoined in 2009 when Najib became the prime minister.