

# 'Resigning would be irresponsible'

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## PM prepared to hold special Parliament sitting with bipartisan support

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**PETALING JAYA:** Resigning as Prime Minister will be irresponsible at a time when there is no other MP with a majority because there will be no one to manage the pandemic when there is no functioning Cabinet, says Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said he is prepared to hold a special Parliament sitting before the new session on Sept 6 if there is bipartisan support for his government, and will extend formal invitations to all political parties to discuss the offers on the table for this bipartisan backing.

He also promised to hold a general election by July next year to return the mandate to the people.

The Prime Minister was adamant, however, that "kleptocrats" would not be allowed to rule.

Muhyiddin said this in a televised address yesterday, offering concessions to opposition MPs in a plea for bipartisan support to enable the Perikatan Nasional government to continue under his leadership.

"The reason I am offering these proposals is to enable the government to continue to function during this pandemic, with bipartisan support in Parliament.

"At the same time, I have the responsibility of ensuring klepto-



**Focused on the country:** Muhyiddin delivering his televised address backed by Cabinet members. — Bernama

crats do not rule, if this political upheaval is not solved quickly," said Muhyiddin.

He also expressed his disappointment over the MPs who retracted their support from him and the government, which set off the political uncertainty.

On Aug 3, Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi announced that 11 Umno MPs had withdrawn their support for the Perikatan government and Muhyiddin as Prime Minister, adding that statutory declarations from the lawmakers were sent to the King.

A number of those who retracted their support, including former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, are currently facing corruption charges in court.

Muhyiddin said it was unbecoming of these MPs to raise doubts over his legitimacy as Prime Minister at a time when the government was busy managing the pandemic.

"As a human being, I am not exempt from weaknesses, what more as a Prime Minister who has had to bear a heavy responsibility of managing an extraordinary pan-

demical for the past one year and more.

"The support of Perikatan MPs is what put me here. My legitimacy is through the support of the majority of MPs.

"However, while my colleagues in the Cabinet and I work hard to manage the pandemic, some MPs have retracted their support. This raised doubts about my legitimacy as the PM and that of the Perikatan government.

"I have two choices under the Constitution: to ask the King for a dissolution and hold an election, or to resign," he added.

Muhyiddin said although resigning would be the easier choice to make, this would lead to the King having to appoint another MP as prime minister.

"Under Article 43(3) of the Federal Constitution, the King can appoint a Prime Minister from among MPs, whom he believes has the confidence of the majority of the Dewan Rakyat.

"I adhere to the Constitution and would have taken the most respectable way to resolve the current political upheaval.

"However, up till now, no other MP can prove that he or she has the majority support of the House to enable him or her to be appointed as the new Prime Minister.

"If I resign now, not only do I resign as Prime Minister.

"According to the Constitution, the whole Cabinet will have to resign. This means the current government will fall.

"At a time when no other MP has the majority, a prime minister cannot be appointed. When a prime minister cannot be appointed, no Cabinet can be formed.

"What will happen to our country if the political crisis continues and a new government cannot be formed as quickly as possible? Which government will ensure vaccination programmes will run as scheduled?"

"I do not intend to cling on to power. In this situation, it is fair to return the mandate to the people to choose a new government when the time is right.

"Because of the pandemic, I promise that the election will be held by the end of next July.

"I invite all political party leaders to discuss this next week. I will extend formal invitations soon and I am prepared to hear their views.

"My priority is managing this pandemic and solving this political crisis according to the Constitution," said Muhyiddin.

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