

**Koh's Second-Term Gerakan Presidency Hinges On Party's General Election Outcome**  
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**By Alan Ting**

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon's decision to go for a second term as Gerakan president is likely to depend on the party's performance in the next general election.

"I said it earlier ... two terms maximum, but it depends on the general election result," he told Bernama in an interview when asked whether he wants to lead the party for a second term.

Gerakan has postponed its party elections scheduled for this year to next year as it wants to focus on the next general election.

Dr Koh said his major concern was the people, then the party and thirdly himself. "Personal interest is not in the picture."

Asked whether he would contest in the next general election, the 13th, or choose to lead the party without going for any seat, Dr Koh said he would only reveal that "when the time comes".

Dr Koh said he needs to assess the situation which he regards as "very fluid" at the moment.

"I must assess the situation. Then, when the time comes or near to the time, I will try to make the best decision, not for me personally but for the people and the party. There are a few options, which I don't want to elaborate," he said.

Asked about Gerakan's candidates for the next general election, Dr Koh said the list had not been completely finalised as there was a need for more consideration and deliberation within the party leadership.

"In some areas, it is clear-cut but in some areas, not. The candidates must be acceptable not just to the party but, most importantly, to the people," he said.

On whether there is a possibility of swapping seats, he said there were already "some casual comparison of notes" with some menteris besar to obtain feedback.

"I always take the position that it is better to continue discussing this internally, through the BN (Barisan Nasional) channels and forums," he said, adding that he learned this from the late Gerakan president Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu. Dr Koh has been a political secretary of Dr Lim.

On his relationship with former president Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik, Dr Koh said: "My relationship with Tun (Dr Lim) is still good. I respect him. The outburst ... of course there was some damage but I take it in my stride. Even in a family, the elder can lose temper.

After I explained to him, he understood. I don't take it to heart. We don't allow that to damage our relationship. He is like an elder brother to me."

Dr Lim had said that he was disappointed with the way Dr Koh handled the conflicts in the party, and said Dr Koh's attitude of "speaking no evil and burying his head in the sand" had brought about many problems in the party.

Dr Lim resigned as party advisor but remained as the party's Life Members Council chairman.

On whether Gerakan will take a stand similar to the MCA and not accept any Cabinet post if it fails to perform in the next general election, Dr Koh explained that there won't be anything for the party to decide on if it fails to perform in the next general election.

"We only won two parliamentary seats in the last general election (in 2008), Simpang Renggam (Johor) and Gerik (Perak). I don't want to say this but we have already gone down from 10 parliamentary seats to two. If we go down further, there will be nothing left for us to decide anymore," he said.

He explained that Gerakan cannot outdo other political parties in terms of words as the party generally consists more of technocrats and a service-oriented base. This, he said, has put the party more on work rather than word.

"Of course, we understand that under the current mood, we don't attract attention as compared to before. But, if we have not done any work, people would not have supported us in nine consecutive elections since 1969.

"We accept the fact that there were issues such as arrogance, abuse of power, lack of fairness or even discrimination in the last general election. We are responsible, but we also suffered the mood that boiled over or resulted in collateral damage," he said.

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