

Tsu Koon Denies Being Pressured To Stay Away From Next General Election
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GEORGE TOWN, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Gerakan president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon today dismissed an allegation that he was pressured by the Barisan Nasional (BN) into not contesting in the next general election.

He said he was not pressured by any party or individual and that he had already decided not to contest as early as January this year but had kept silent because of the numerous by-elections, the Sarawak state election and the Bersih 2.0 rally.

Dr Koh spoke to reporters after attending the convocation of the Wawasan Open University (WOU) here. Eighty graduands received their Masters degrees from WOU Chancellor Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

"It was not the right time to announce the decision then. It would have meant that I was not aligned with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and the people. As such, I waited for the appropriate time," Dr Koh said.

He was asked to comment on the allegation by Penang Chief Minister and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng that his decision to not contest in the next general election was prompted by pressure from the BN and the media.

Dr Koh made the announcement on Thursday, saying it was part of Gerakan's leadership renewal and that he would concentrate on strengthening the party machinery, picking the electoral candidates and coordinating the party's publicity and campaign strategy for the general election.

Asked to comment on the statement by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that he should resign as Gerakan president, Dr Koh said he could do so but felt that he had a responsibility towards the party and would remain to assist it in the next general election as almost all leaders from the deputy president down would be contesting.

"Let the others focus on their constituencies while I manage the party. I will be at the frontline to ward off the attacks against Gerakan," he said.

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