

**Palanivel's Intention To Extend Term Beyond 2016 Receives Mixed Reaction**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri G.Palanivel's intention to continue to hold the post of president even after his term ends in 2016, has received mixed reaction from leaders and political analysts. MIC strategic director S.Vell Paari said if Palanivel continued to receive huge support from the branch chairmen and members, then he had to follow the mandate to remain as president to strengthen the party. "If the majority (of branch chairmen) want him to continue, he has the right to do so for the sake of the party. Palanivel has to follow the wishes of the branch chairmen as he has been given the mandate by them," he told Bernama when contacted Sunday. Vell Paari cited an example of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad who surprisingly announced his resignation at the Umno General Assembly in 2002. "In 2002, Tun Mahathir was persuaded to stay on for a further 18 months in a carefully planned handover that ended in October 2003. It's a similar situation with Palanivel," he added.

Earlier, after being elected as the eighth MIC president unopposed, Palanivel, who is also natural resources and environment minister, announced he might continue to hold the president post even after his term ends in 2016, after receiving overwhelming support from the branch chairmen. Echoing similar sentiments, political analyst Dr Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani said Palanivel could do that if he had the mandate and support of the party. "He (Palanivel) can argue that the party still wants him to stay. Other than that, he has no concrete argument because he has made a promise to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to step down by 2016," said the dean of the School of International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia. Mohd Azizuddin noted that if any other leader wanted to succeed him, they should make a bid and challenge him, "as this is part of democracy and allowed under the MIC constitution". "This will not jeopardise Barisan Nasional (BN) because BN is a coalition of 13 parties. If one is in trouble, BN still has 12 more to support it unless they are fighting with each other. Today, BN is still strong," he said. Universiti Sains Malaysia's School of Social Sciences senior lecturer, Assoc Prof Dr Sivamurugan Pandian noted that the details of the compromise between Palanivel and his deputy Datuk Seri Dr S.Subramaniam were not revealed to the public. "We do not know the details, and largely it depends on all parties involved in having the agreement on presidency election. Only then we can decide whether it would jeopardise the agreement or certain parties or BN," he said. However, MCA vice-president Datuk Donald Lim Siang Chai felt otherwise, that Palanivel should keep his word and step down in 2016. "No one can stop him (Palanivel) from contesting the party's top post again. But, he must fulfil his promise or people will lose trust in him," he said. Congratulating Palanivel for being elected as the eighth MIC president, Lim said this decision would not affect BN as a whole, because the issue would be solely decided by the party members. People's Progressive Party (PPP) national information chief, Datuk A.Chandrakumanan said people should not "jump the gun" by quickly judging Palanivel on his statement. "Palanivel must be firm and have his own principles with his decision to step down in 2016 even though he has received overwhelming support from the branch chairmen and members, or else the community will not believe in him as a leader," he said. Chandrakumanan stressed that this sudden decision would not affect BN as a whole as it was MIC's internal matter. Meanwhile, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi hoped that Palanivel would keep his promise to relinquish the top MIC post after one term. He said although Palanivel received a high number of nominations, enabling him to win the post uncontested, it would be better for him to keep his promise. "The high number of nominations he received was the result of the formula of compromise reached. "Since that is the case, it'll be good for him to hand over the MIC presidency to (party deputy

president) Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam after this (when his term ends in 2016)," he said when met at the Aidilfitri open house of Umno executive secretary Datuk AB Rauf Yusoh, here, tonight. Ahmad Zahid, however, congratulated Palanivel on his victory and hoped the compromise among the MIC leaders would continue for unity to prevail to ensure the party's stability.

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