

Dr Mahathir, patron of Umno group seeking Najib's ouster
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Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has officially become the patron of the Coalition of Branch Chiefs Malaysia (GKCM), a group of Umno branch leaders demanding party president Datuk Seri Najib Razak's resignation.

Dr Mahathir's new role in GKCM will see him attending their programmes and coming up with strategies to "save" the Malay ruling party, the group said in a statement today.

"GKCM has once again made history, with Tun Mahathir officially declaring he will become GKCM's patron and that he will collaborate in the coalition's programmes.

"Tun said this during a meeting with 21 GKCM central committee members in his office at the Yayasan Al Bukhari in Kuala Lumpur," GKCM said in a statement.

During the meeting, the country's longest-serving prime minister said he was proud of GKCM's courage and the achievements it had accomplished within such a short time, the group said.

He said GKCM brought balance to Umno at a time when the party was in turmoil, and that it could help strengthen the party, said the group.

"Tun once again reiterated his concerns that more and more intellectuals were increasingly phased out from the party.

"GKCM's presence can balance out the group that has hurt the party so much," it said.

Since declaring last year that he had withdrawn support for Najib, Dr Mahathir has become the prime minister's most vocal critic, often turning to his blog to call for his resignation.

But Najib and Barisan Nasional (BN) have largely shrugged off Dr Mahathir's criticism, and he suffered a huge setback recently when his son, Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir, was stripped of his position as Kedah menteri besar and Umno Kedah chief.

GKCM was formed last November, ahead of Umno's general assembly, to press Najib to quit his post to save the party. – February 13, 2016.

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