

Stung by revolt, Mukhriz says mandate from people
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Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir tonight insisted his mandate as Kedah Menteri Besar came from the people and approval from the state ruler, hours after his party colleagues said they had lost confidence in his leadership.

Fourteen of the 15 Umno division chiefs in Kedah want Mukhriz replaced, saying the first-term MB has failed to strategise to keep the government in the next election due by 2018.

"I leave it to the people to judge my performance and effectiveness with the party leadership since the first day Barisan Nasional returned to govern Kedah in the 13th general election.

"As said previously, I hold the trust to serve as best I can for the peace and prosperity of the people. The people and voters will assess my administration's capabilities," he added in a four-paragraph statement issued tonight.

Mukhriz is the youngest son of former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who has vowed since two years ago to oust Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak for alleged economic and social misdeeds.

There has been speculation that Mukhriz would be replaced after Dr Mahathir went on a warpath in 2014 but no major moves were made until the 14 division leaders made an open revolt today.

"I have heard the statement issued by part of the Kedah Umno leadership led by deputy state liaison chairman Datuk Seri Ahmad Bashah Md Hanipah in Alor Star this evening.

"My position as Menteri Besar is on the mandate and trust given by the people and the approval of the Sultan of Kedah upon the recommendation of the prime minister," Mukhriz said in response to the revolt.

Ahmad Bashah today said 14 of the state's division leaders and wing leaders were seeking an intervention from party president to remove Mukhriz.

"Firstly, Mukhriz has failed to unite the party leadership and machinery at all levels in the state.

"Secondly, there has been no strategic party planning to face the 14th general election."

Among the lawmakers present at the press conference were Kubang Pasu MP Datuk Mohd Johari Bahrom, Padang Terap MP Ghazali Ibrahim, Jerai MP Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom and Baling MP Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim.

Hundreds of supporters of Mukhriz tonight gathered in front of Bangunan Tunku Umno Kedah in Alor Star tonight to stand in solidarity with their state leader.

The crowd began gathering since 8pm. Many chanted Mukhriz's name to show their support, just as Kedah Umno wanted him out.

He arrived at 9.30pm to loud applause and cheers from the crowd.

Before his appointment as Kedah menteri besar, Mukhriz served as deputy minister of international trade and industry. – January 20, 2016.

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