

## **Ku Li goes for UMNO president**

**BERNAMA**

**16/06/2018**

KUALA LUMPUR, June 16 (Bernama) -- Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah is going for UMNO president.

The 81-year-old veteran UMNO leader, who is the Gua Musang UMNO Division chief, announced today that he was offering himself for the post at the party elections on June 30.

He said at a press conference at his residence here that he arrived at the decision after scrutinising the position and situation of UMNO, especially with regard to its leadership.

"I made the decision in the interest of UMNO as a national political organisation that supports the national aspirations upholding racial unity and harmony as the foundation of the nation. I am confident that I can continue upholding this tradition in leading UMNO as a political party rich in experience," he said.

Tengku Razaleigh also said that he would ensure that UMNO played its role as an opposition party loyal and responsible to the country in its move to be a developed nation.

The Gua Musang MP, who has held the seat for 44 years, said UMNO would nurture Malay culture and heritage and respect the racial diversity in the country.

At the same time, he said, the leadership at the lower echelons would institute changes to adjust the party to the political reality in the era after the 14th general election.

"It cannot be denied that Malaysia has reached a political maturity that we can be proud of. This political maturity demands politically mature leaders.

"The same goes for UMNO. As an active politician since becoming a member of UMNO in

1962, it is not too extreme for me to say that I am well-versed with the political intricacies of partisan politics and politics at the national level. I regard this as a test for anyone who wants to offer himself for leadership," he said.

Asked whether he was confident of winning the election for the No. 1 post in the party, he said it was dependent on securing much support at the divisional level and the choice of party members.

Tengku Razaleigh is expected to submit his nomination form at any time before the closing date tomorrow.

This is not the first time that Tengku Razaleigh has gone for the UMNO No.1 post. In 1987, he challenged Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the party presidency but lost by 43 votes.

In 2004, he offered himself as a candidate for the top post against Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi but failed to secure the required number of nominations.

Tengku Razaleigh said he had no specific candidates for the other senior posts in the party because all candidates represented the party as a whole.

Asked whether he would sack former party president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak from UMNO if he won the presidency, he said: Why should I do that? Unless there is something grossly wrong somewhere.

Asked whether he had discussed his decision to contest the presidency at his meeting with UMNO vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who is discharging the duties of the president, he said that at their meeting Ahmad Zahid only explained the current position of the party.

"(Ahmad) Zahid met me after taking over as acting president following Najib's resignation to explain the latest position of the party. I wished him well and advised him to run the

party in accordance with its objectives," he said.

Asked whether he would be the Opposition Leader in Parliament if he won the party presidency, Tengku Razaleigh said that would be up to the decision of Parliament.

Johor Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and Titiwangsa UMNO Division chief Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani were also present at the press conference.

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