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Attack on Suhakam, Musa in bad taste

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AZHAR Zahari's letter "Musa's statement appears biased" (NST, Aug 14) appears to be more of an indictment of Tan Sri Musa Hitam's credentials as Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) chairman than as a constructive comment on the Commission's performance.

His repeated references to Musa's past "mistakes", including the Memali incident, the 1987 Umno leadership challenge and the more recent skirmish with Datuk Aziz Sheikh Fadzir, betray an obsessive antipathy to a person who, despite having long since left the stations of power, still commands the admiration and respect of Malaysians from all walks of life.

If Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and others now in Government can ignore past political differences and appoint Musa to such a prestigious body, the least the rest of us can do is to let him get on with his job and not be too hasty in judging him.

Dr Mahathir must have given the appointment a great deal of thought before he made the recommendation to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Musa certainly has "shortcomings" as he is only human. But surely he possesses impressive credentials for the position.

The man speaks his mind and, at times, this had caused problems for his political career.

Musa's vast exposure to both the local political process and international diplomacy brings to the job both the needed perspective and credibility.

The job needs such a man, not a sycophant.

That people listen to him when he speaks is also what Suhakam needs to get the attention it deserves, particularly to avoid an untimely death under reactionary, and at times hostile, pressure of intolerance.

Datuk Aziz and other Umno leaders who were so eager to condemn Suhakam's statement had forgotten that in doing so, they were in fact questioning the wisdom of their superiors in the party and Government.

Indeed their act could be interpreted as a disguised opposition to Suhakam's formation.

It is a great failing of our society that a man is seldom allowed to fulfil his true potential simply because he is considered less than perfect.

Surely, one's propensity to contribute to the greater good deserves equal if not greater consideration.

Not satisfied with questioning Musa's credentials, Amir Azhari went on to take a pot-shot at another member of the Commission, a former judge who had served the country well, but who, in the opinion of the writer, had committed the unforgivable sin of declaring Umno illegal.

Some people were actually thankful for that judgment as it paved the way for a resolution of an impasse and the formation of Umno Baru.

Let us not be pushed back by finding faults in others. Give Musa and Suhakam a chance.