

**More racial polarisation now, decries Mahathir**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**February 10, 2011**

Eight years after giving up power, former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad he thinks that there is more racial polarisation now than during his 'time'.

And the main culprit for that, he claimed is the increasing freedom of speech and expression in the country.

'We, we should be more liberal', (the critics) argue, and permit more discussion of controversial issues, like race relations, for example.

"The moment they do that, they go back. They go back to discussing this (kind of) thing and getting emotional, and getting angry with each other. And now, we have become more separate than we were during the time when this was going on.

"During my time, people didn't discuss, and therefore they didn't get heated up," he was quoted as saying.

In the most recent book on Mahathir (left), 'Doctor M: Operation Malaysia - Conversations with Mahathir Mohamad', American journalist Tom Plate interviewed the former premier of 22 years between mid-2009 and mid-2010, spread over four sessions.

Plate then asked: "So is Malaysia tensing up again? You mean, you think there's more polarisation now?"

"Yeah. Yes. More, much more," Mahathir replied. "And, that's due to... why is that?"

"Well, because you allow people to talk. And, of course they will say things which will hurt the other side." "And you didn't allow that."

"At that time we didn't allow that. You want to talk about these things, let's have a closed room, let the leaders talk, and you'll settle it, that's what you can do," said Mahathir. Despite current PM Najib Abdul Razak propagating the 1Malaysia slogan to foster racial unity, it is known that Mahathir has his reservations about the concept.

**Preventive laws gluing the country**

Mahathir, a known advocate of preventive laws and detention without trial, also further defended his enforcement of the laws when asked about Malaysia's multicultural balance.

"Oh, you take early action. You do things before they happen. You know, a lot of things have been said against these preventive laws. But preventive laws are laws meant to prevent crimes, or whatever, from happening, because they are meant to deter people from doing something..."

"When you see people getting over-emotional in a multiracial country, you know that sooner, and sooner rather than later, they would be fighting each other. They would actually be killing each other, and this happened in 1969," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/155641>