

Ops Lalang: Dr M accuses DAP leaders of lying
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad stands firm on this statement that he did meet with opposition leaders prior to Operation Lalang in 1987.

This is despite the fact that several opposition leaders including DAP stalwarts Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh have denied that any such meeting had taken place.

They are lying. I have no reason to make that claim unless it had happened.

"But I don't expect the opposition leaders to be grateful of what the government has done especially if it came from me," he told journalists today.

In a book by American journalist Tom Plate, Mahathir was quoted as saying that he had met opposition leaders to assure them that they would not be arrested prior to the swoop, which saw the detention of 106 people.

As in the book, the elder statesman today said that he did not believe that the opposition leaders should be arrested, but the police had nevertheless insisted.

Lim had earlier challenged Mahathir to name the individuals whom the former premier claimed to have met, which Mahathir answered yesterday: "Lim Kit Siang and his friends".

'Typical Mahathir retort'

In a statement today, Lim, who was DAP secretary-general in 1987, said that the opposition leaders would have never let the former PM off if what he said was true.

"lim kit siang parliament pc 201008 02We would have ridiculed him as an impotent prime minister and home minister at the beck and call of the police, which everybody knows was not true," he said.

He added that if it was purely the police's decision, then why was then Umno Youth chief Najib Razak, who had led a mammoth rally demanding that the keris be soaked in Chinese blood, spared.

"I did pose this question to Mahathir after my release together with (son Lim) Guan Eng from Kamunting Detention Centre on April 19, 1989 ... after 18 months of detention.

"In my meeting with Mahathir on May 6, 1989, I had asked Mahathir point-blank... There was no proper answer ... only the typical illogical Mahathir retort: 'Who asked you to provoke him (the police chief)?'" he said.

Then police chief Mohammed Hanif Omar has told Malaysiakini on Thursday that the decision to arrest the political dissidents was made by his men.

In the 1987 crackdown on Oct 27, 106 people - mostly opposition and a handful of MCA and Umno politicians - were arrested under the Internal Security Act while the publishing permits for The Star and Sin Chew Jit Poh and Watan were revoked.

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