

Zaid: I can live with 'zero credibility' jibe
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INTERVIEW Mindful that his critics have been less than kind about his credibility, Kita president Zaid Ibrahim remains unfazed.

"Some say I have zero credibility but I can live with that," he said in an interview with Malaysiakini at his Petaling Jaya residence last Friday.

"It doesn't depend on what they think of me, it depends on what I think of myself and my views about myself and what politics in this country should be have never changed," he added.

Zaid, a former Umno minister in 2008, resigned in protest at the Internal Security Act before joining PKR in 2009 to become a central committee member.

In 2010, he resigned from PKR after a fallout with Azmin Ali, a fellow candidate for the PKR deputy president's post in the party polls, and went on to form Kita.

"What is it I have done that make them so critical of me? I left the party in a contest which I thought was flawed... That's it. So what have I done besides that? Have I cheated anyone? Nothing," he said.

While admitting that he had changed course in his political career, Zaid insists that he remains steadfast on his principles.

'Different roads, same direction'

"People have said a lot of things about me - someone who changes his mind, a flip-flop, no credibility... as much as they like to hate me, they know I still have influence and I believe that I can still contribute, my views are still important.

"I believe in what I'm doing, I don't compromise with the big things. I may change course here and there, but on the larger issues, I don't change, so that is important," he said.

Asked if he will address the negative perception against him, Zaid replied: "I am not in this business of trying to be the most popular guy in town.

"I am not in the contest to be the next prime minister, so I don't worry about that, I don't have to go to the people and say please believe me again.

"I think people should use their head more than their heart, then they will be more understanding of the complexities of politics... I'm just giving them a solution, an alternative view, if they don't like, hard luck."

Zaid added that he has given credit to or criticised politicians from both sides of the political divide when it is due but it has often been misconstrued as taking sides.

"If Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak did something good, I will still praise him, it does not mean I support BN. If I criticise opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, it doesn't mean I'm against the opposition," he said.

'Umno will foil Najib's efforts'

An example, he said, was when Najib first became prime minister, he had criticised the premier as being unable to carry out change due to his political baggage.

“But when he announced that he will repeal the ISA and Emergency Ordinance, that’s great, so I will praise him,” he said.

Zaid added that the premier was sincere in his reforms efforts, but will likely fail.

“My sense is, the prime minister is trying to do something but his party is not allowing him to do... It’s difficult for the prime minister or Umno to change the situation now.

“I’m not saying that the prime minister has not tried, I think he has, but I don’t think he will be successful,” he said.

Asked about his apology to Anwar on Twitter, he said: “I’ve always been critical (of Pakatan Rakyat). I’m still critical in some aspect but some of the things I said may have overstepped, it may have been too harsh, that’s all.

“It was a day before his (sodomy) judgment, so I sent to a tweet to say if I had been too harsh, you know... (I’m sorry) and people think that I was going to go back to PKR,” he said.

While Zaid intends to be critical of both the government and opposition, he stressed that his support would be for the latter.

“Although there are a lot of things that I don’t agree with about Pakatan, I also think that you need a strong opposition, that is paramount.”

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