

**Dr M: 'Privileged' opposition not equal before law**

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**Oleh Aidila Razak**

In yet another satirical article, former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad says there is no equality before the law, especially if one is a "favourite candidate of foreign powers for regime change".

Although Mahathir did not name current Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim, the article entitled "Equality Before the Law" uploaded in his blog today is clearly seen as reference to Anwar.

The maverick politician started his argument by saying those who cannot afford "clever and smart" lawyers or lawyers who are "great politicians" who can be "frightening to the judges" would stand to lose their cases.

"The result of the inequality of representation by brilliant and fearsome lawyers on the one hand and the ordinary run-of-the-mill lawyers is most likely to be victory for the highly paid, brilliant and fearsome lawyers. The rights and wrongs of the case are of little consequence."

Hence, the law almost always favours the rich, not the poor, Mahathir asserted.

"There is clearly no equality before the law. Get a good expensive lawyer and you can get away with murder. Get a bad cheap lawyer and you may be hanged for someone else's murder.

"International law is no better. If you lead a powerful country you can massacre a few millions and all that happens is a statue, as a war hero, will be put up in your honour," he said.

Mahathir then trained his gun at the BN opposition, saying that the government of a poor and weak country acting against violence by the opposition may be accused of oppression and tolerating police brutality.

'Opposition clever to promise freedoms'

"The opposition, when they are clever enough to promise a variety of freedoms, can do no wrong even when they use violence to provoke the police into so-called acts of brutality," Mahathir says in his usual satirical tone.

The same goes to the "favourite candidate" of foreign powers for regime change, he adds, citing the violence against the police during the Bersih 3.0 rally on April 28, but without naming the Bersih rally.

"If an election is near and the favourite is going to be a candidate and bring about regime change, then government action against this privileged person would be regarded as attempts to undermine his chances of overthrowing the government.

"That the favourite purposely timed his violence just when elections are near would be ignored. That the provocation of the police is deliberate and meant to elicit 'police brutality' will also be ignored. That the police are beaten up, that police cars have their glass windshields smashed and the police car is overturned in full view of TV cameras - all these are inconsequential," he says.

Mahathir stressed that the government action against the favoured opposition would be deemed political, rather than an exercise in legal equality.

"The clamour is for the police to be charged for crimes against the people. Actions by the police to enforce the law must not be allowed. These must be regarded as criminal acts.

"But blatant criminal acts by the opposition leaders must be regarded as permissible. In law they must be considered as privileged people.

"There really is no equality before the law. Instead there is blatant inequality; there is bias in favour of some people especially the aspirants for regime change," he adds.

Malaysia's longest serving prime minister has been defending the government and the police clampdown on the Bersih 3.0 rally that demanded clean and fair elections.

He has called the rally a warm-up for "violent demonstrations", should the opposition fail to win the next general election.