

**Dr M: Gov't weak, but its not Najib's fault**  
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has warned current Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak not to alienate members of the ruling coalition.

In an interview with Bloomberg published today, Mahathir said that any defections from BN could result in BN losing the next general election.

"The problem here is not Najib - he is a leader of a weak government," said Mahathir, who once led Malaysia and BN for 22 years.

The Bloomberg article notes that although Najib is largely popular among Malaysians - citing a Merdeka Centre survey that puts his approval rating at 64 percent - there is increasing unhappiness with the government's performance.

However, the article did not explore defection from BN in detail. BN under Najib has seen the defection of four MPs in Sabah, including the withdrawal of Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP).

Mahathir said Umno's main coalition partners - MCA, Gerakan and MIC - have undergone leadership problems that weakened BN, but he said the coalition now is still better off than it was in 2008.

"Najib is much more popular now," said Mahathir, who won five consecutive elections as prime minister.

"Previously, the people were not against BN, but they were more angry with the previous prime minister, his family and son-in-law," he said, referring to his successor Abdullah and Khairy Jamaluddin, the current leader of Umno's youth wing.