

Dr M's interference an insult to PM Najib, says Karpal

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By Susan Loone

DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh has asked former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to "take a walk" instead of trying to control the government of the day.

He said the ex-premier, who quit his post in 2003, should stop controlling the government.

karpal singh pc in penang "It is an insult to the (current premier) Najib Razak's administration that he should be told what to do (by Mahathir)," quipped Karpal.

Karpal said Mahathir (left) should be like the country's former prime ministers who, after retiring from office, receded into private life.

"They have not done anything to influence the government of the day," he said, at a press conference in Air Itam today.

"This is the same in other countries, that's how the system works," Karpal added.

"Even in America, once the president retires he does not interfere in the administration," he pointed out.

Karpal was referring to Mahathir's remarks yesterday urging the government to be tough on the opposition "who continue to insult the nation's democratic system".

"We need to be a bit tough and not give them face," he was quoted as saying by Bernama, the government news agency.

Mahathir had accused the opposition of wanting to change the people's choice overnight after failing to win majority support in the 13th general election.

His statement came after weeks of Pakatan Rakyat allegations of electoral fraud incidents in the May 5 polls.

NONEThe opposition coalition went on to organise several nationwide rallies dubbed 'Blackout 505' to protest the polls' results which returned BN to power despite garnering only 47 percent of the popular vote.

Karpal said Mahathir failed to show political maturity despite being 88 years old.

"Mahathir himself started well when he became PM in 1981. He is on record of having released several ISA detainees who were locked up by the previous administration, some since 1974," Karpal recalled.

"But during the Operasi Lalang in 1987, he went back to his original position by detaining opposition members and activists," he said, referring to the dragnet which saw 107 people swept up under the draconian law.

"It's payback time (for those who do not support BN) as immediately after the election, opposition members either got charged with sedition or for offences under the Public Assembly Act," he added.

Don't kow-tow to Mahathir

Meanwhile, PAS Youth chief Nasruddin Hassan (below) said despite his retirement, Mahathir continues to demonstrate his "hardline tactics against the opposition, while belittling the democratic process".

pas muktamar 130610 nasruddin hassan 2 "It is so unfortunate if Najib continues to listen and kow-tow to the former PM. Mahathir should just sit quietly and observe the developments in the country," he said.

"There are new leaders in the Cabinet with Najib, have full confidence in him and there is no need for Mahathir to simply issue statements because all quarters become panicky with his appearance," he added.

"It appears as if Mahathir has quit his official post but in terms of work, he continues to control government policies," he stressed.

Nasruddin said several politicians and activists have already being detained and charged in court, asking "if this is what Mahathir meant by soft approach, what would the hard one be like?"

The government has yet to permit Pakatan to hold its rally in Padang Merbok on June 22, while Opposition newspapers like Suara Keadilan (PKR), Harakah (PAS) and Rocket (DAP) have been seized in several states, he added.

"Civil servants have been threatened and bribed so that they won't support Pakatan, government machineries have been fully abused while the Election Commission and other federal agencies have been manipulated, is this what he meant by being soft?" asked Nasrudin.

"Mahathir's statement should be a reminder to Najib not to repeat his past mistakes," he added.

Nasruddin said this was because Mahathir, who sparked the Reformasi Movement with his sacking of his then deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, was one of the reasons for Umno to be rejected by the people.

He urged Najib to ignore Mahathir's comment and focus on building the nation by listening to the people at grassroots level.

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