

## **Zaid: If Najib goes, who will be next PM?**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Jan 27, 2014**

Known for his expertise in exterminating political careers, it is rumoured that Dr Mahathir Mohamad's dagger is now pointed at Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Speculation is rife that there is a concerted effort spearheaded by the former premier to oust the current premier.

But former law minister Zaid Ibrahim (left) questioned who would then succeed Najib?

"Those who want Najib to step down do not tell us who they want to succeed him. Some have touted the idea of a Ruling Council, presumably headed by Dr M," he said in his blog.

"That would be ridiculous! Just because crazy Thai demonstrators are asking for the People's Council to replace an elected PM, that does not mean we should follow their lead," he added.

Zaid also shot down the possibility of Umno vice-president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi taking over the leadership reins.

"If Ahmad Zahid (below) were to succeed Najib, do you really think we will be better off? Only if you want half the country to wear military uniforms, patrolling and monitoring the other half with armed weapons.

"It's not enough for him that we have 300,000 Rela members – now he wants Syariah enforcement militias as well," he added.

Weak reasons to demand Najib's head

Zaid, a former Umno member, said Mahathir's supporters have offered a reasoning that is "weak, even contrived at best" for Najib to step down.

"They say Najib has failed because the prices of goods and services have gone up, but we can expect this to happen when subsidies are cut. And subsidies have to be cut to reduce the deficit in the country's accounts, which in turn has come from the government spending more than it received in revenue. This is a cumulative effect

of many years of unsound economic management, and Najib is not solely to blame for this.

"The former prime minister's fan club members also point to the more than 50,000 unemployed graduates in Malaysia as proof of Najib's failure, but we have had this many (or more) unemployed or unemployable graduates since 1995.

"This is thanks to our insistence on wanting more Malays in the universities, regardless of the circumstances. We have given our schoolchildren innumerable As to please parents, but these students had to end up in universities somewhere. Umno likes to build universities all over the country and they can't be left vacant. This is not Najib's fault either," he added.

Zaid also pointed out that Dr M's (right) supporters also castigate Najib for traveling in private jets.

However, he said this penchant for luxury living has been the lifestyle of all Malaysian prime ministers, except for the first three.

"Since then our PMs have all lived in style, going on holidays in private jets and sailing the high seas in their yachts (which they always claimed to belong to their friends). Najib is just following the trend, even if he has perhaps taken the matter of style a notch or two up. Still, it's not sufficient grounds to remove him," he added.

Zaid also dismissed the demand from this group for Najib to change as unrealistic and meaningless.

"What change can Najib possibly try to implement without upsetting Umno? Would Umno be happy if Najib were to remove the tolls, scrap APs and reduce cars prices? The same people asking for Najib's removal would cry blue murder, and they would still demand his removal, this time for betraying the Malay race.

"Would they be happy if he woke up one morning and declared that the rule of law will be the order of the day? That the Official Secrets Act will be removed (except for matters of military and police intelligence)? That the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission will have the power to prosecute the corrupt without needing to get the blessing of the attorney-general? These same critics would not be happy," he added.

Zaid also denied that Najib's continued presence at the helm would put BN at risk of losing the next general election.

"This is again a remote possibility. BR1M3 is coming soon and Najib will be sure to have more of that before the next GE. His popularity will be restored.

"The wisdom of the saying 'Melayu mudah lupa' (The Malays forget easily) is not lost on our PM. Furthermore, the delineation exercise will somehow protect the present majority in Parliament and Najib will again win at the polls," he added.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/252905>