

Najib told to muzzle his barking dogs to woo Dr M
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A veteran newsman, known for his pro-establishment views, has outlined several steps for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to win back Dr Mahathir Mohamad's support.

Among them, is for Najib to "hold back the barking dogs".

"If they are going to be 'kurang ajar' (insolent), tell them to shut up unless they are willing to take on the old man until the end," said Ahiruddin Attan.

"Often, these dogs would bark and irritate and then run. They only serve to irritate Mahathir, who would intensify his attacks on Najib," he added.

The former Malay Mail top editor recalled how during the time of Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the "barking dogs" used the mainstream media in their attempt to demonise Mahathir.

In the end, Ahiruddin, who is popularly known as Rocky, said their master paid a dear price.

Najib needs Dr M's support

The well-known blogger also stressed that Najib needed the former premier's support, especially at this juncture.

"The PM needs everyone's support. These are trying times for his party, for his race and religion, and for the entire country.

"He needs the people to rally behind him and if those standing behind him include Mahathir, the better for him," he said.

"Therefore, Mahathir's decision to publicly declare he was withdrawing support for the Umno president is not a minor setback. It's something Najib can do without," he added.

Ahiruddin also said that Najib must treat the former premier's criticism seriously, but in a positive manner.

"Mahathir's criticisms are constructive, mostly. The worst thing Najib could do is to try and defend himself publicly and vehemently.

"He should use pen and paper, start writing to his ex-boss and tell him what he's doing that the old man may not be aware of," he added.

Change the policy executors

Ahiruddin also advised Najib to stick to his policies, but change the executors since some of them are suspect.

"And for heaven's sake, stop rewarding them with cushy posts that pay so well it makes people in his camp actually wish they were mediocre," he added.

The veteran newsman also urged the prime minister to improve Umno and BN's image, which he said was deteriorating badly.

"Granted, Najib inherited damaged goods from Abdullah but he should be bolder in his efforts to improve the image and perception.

"Mahathir isn't the only one worried about the fact that Malaysia lacks capable leaders to take over (if Muhyiddin Yasin decides to call it a day, that is). I am not an Umno member and I am concerned with the lack of credible leaders in the party," he said.

Ahiruddin added that Pakatan Rakyat is not an alternative anymore, "now that their leaders have unravelled themselves in Selangor and earlier in Kedah and Perak, and with the nonsense that has been going on in Penang with regards to Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng's mega, mega projects."

Lastly, he called on Najib to engage his ex-boss, Mahathir and not allow his media advisers to sort things out on his behalf.

"Abdullah's mistake was he allowed himself to be lulled into believing that his media head honcho then, a millionaire journalist with great Singapore connections, had the gumption and the touch to take on anybody and everybody, including Mahathir.

"That was a fatal mistake. The PM must tell his editors and his social media handlers to not try to be clever. Engage the old man. Go and see him. Sort things out," he added.

Earlier this week, Mahathir had launched a broadside on Najib and expressed disappointment in his leadership.

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