

Why is Najib so defensive?

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Since Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched his tirade last week, politicians both past and present have crawled out of the woodwork to defend Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The latest is former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who cleared his successor of any involvement in the grisly murder of Mongolian translator Altantuya Shaariibuu.

However, a source close to Mahathir pointed out that the former premier never pointed fingers at Najib, but merely asked if someone had ordered the killing of the Mongolian national.

"So why is Najib being so defensive?" he asked.

Mahathir himself has denied accusing Najib of committing a crime, saying that he only posed a question that had been on the minds of the people.

Similarly, PKR vice-president Rafizi Ramli warned that if the prime minister continued to dodge straightforward questions, the people would doubt his honesty and credibility.

"Worse, the public would think he has something to hide," he told Malaysiakini.

According to the MP for Pandan, what exacerbated the situation was when Najib, instead of answering the "two simple questions", instructed others to come forward to clear him.

"Why is the need to get others to vouch for you when it is so easy to answer?"

"Mahathir only echoes these two questions that common Malaysians have been asking for years. In fact, we (the opposition) asked these questions much earlier, but never got a response.

"The more people come forward to clear Najib, the more the public think he has something to hide. And Mahathir would win in terms of demolishing Najib's credibility.

"Slowly, yet surely, the PM's days in Umno are numbered, unless he confronts this and gives direct answers himself," Rafizi added.

'Who ordered the murder?'

He pointed out that central to the controversy surrounding Najib are the questions on who ordered former police commandos Sirul Azhar Umar and Azilah Hadri to kill Altantuya and what happened to the RM42 billion taken as loans by 1Malaysia Development Bhd.

"The public knows that they (Sirul and Azilah) were found guilty but the people also know that they didn't do it on their own volition. They were ordered to kill.

"The whole country wants to know who ordered the murder because only when those who ordered the murder are punished, then we can satisfy our conscience that justice is served," Rafizi said, referring to the case where motive was not established.

Though the two former police commandos were convicted and sentenced to death, Sirul, who fled to Australia before the verdict was delivered, told Malaysiakini that he acted under orders and at the same time, denied murdering the Mongolian national.

On the same note, another observer argued that if the prime minister was not involved in the case, how could he shed light on a motive or if anyone had issued any order.

PM reiterates innocence

On the RM42 billion loan for 1MDB, Rafizi said: "We know there are assets here and there, but we want to see the money in the bank, proof that the money is in the bank. If it is not in the bank, where did it go?"

"These are very simple, straightforward questions. By right, Najib can answer them, simply by being straightforward as well," he added.

In a pre-recorded interview with TV3 aired last night, Najib reiterated his innocence with regard to the Altantuya case and revealed that members of the 1MDB board had met with Mahathir to explain the issues concerning the firm.