

**Dr M: I never stopped Ku Li from challenging me**  
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad today decried what he claimed to be an attempt within Umno to stop him from speaking out against Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The former premier said when he was Umno president, he never stopped Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (photo) and Musa Hitam from campaigning against him during the Umno leadership crisis in the 1980s.

“They (Tengku Razaleigh and Musa) wanted to go against me and Ghaffar (Baba) to ensure I will not be Umno president and therefore, not prime minister. They wanted to topple me.

“I did not stop them from campaigning among Umno members and Umno members did not bar me from attending the campaigns,” he said on his blog.

He said this is unlike today when Umno members were allegedly unable to hear him speak in Tawau on Oct 5 “because it was not organised by Umno”.

“They said the Umno secretary-general will be angry if members or leaders attended the event,” he said in a blog post today.

He claimed members were given threatening directives - "that action will be taken, investigated and sacked from the party" - even though there is no official challenge for the Umno presidency.

"The party's future is becoming bleaker. There will be no more leaders and no more nominations," he said.

Mahathir said he accepted the invitation to speak in Tawau at an event organised by an “enemy of Umno” because he knows he would never get an invitation from Umno.

According to Sabah newspaper Daily Express, the event was organised by one KIJ Resources.

“I am still an Umno member and was once Umno president, yet the leadership of the party I led for 22 years now sees me as an enemy,” Mahathir said.

### **'Gov't destroyed democracy'**

The former premier lamented that anyone who criticises the Umno president now is accused of sabotage, acting against democracy or trying to topple a democratically elected president.

“And they all get arrested,” he said.

He cited the case of Umno member Khairuddin Abu Hassan (photo), who is detained under the Security Offences and Special Measures Act (Sosma) after lodging reports on 1MDB with international enforcement agencies.

“They even try to intimidate (Khairuddin’s) lawyer,” he said.

Khairuddin’s lawyer Matthias Chang – once Mahathir’s political secretary – was questioned by the police.

“All this is to strike fear in the people, especially Umno members and the lower-ranking leaders. They know something is wrong, but their mouths and ears are shut,” he said.

Mahathir said the Najib government claims there are attempts to topple the prime minister “undemocratically”, but it is Najib who is undemocratic by barring dissent.

“It’s the government that is threatening the people, opposing Umno from listening to political speeches. This is no longer a democratic government.

“There is no democracy to be toppled by the people because democracy was destroyed by the government,” he said.

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