

**Ex-PM to Ambiga: My priority to change PM, not Umno**  
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**Kow Gah Chie**

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his priority is to change Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and not Umno and the system.

“My first priority is to get Najib to step down,” he told a press conference at Malaysia’s War on Corruption Symposium 2015.

“I am very concerned about the first stage - a change in the leadership. But whatever come after that, it is up to the leader to decide,” he said.

He was responding to National Human Right Society president Ambiga Sreenevasan, who suggested that civil society should consider working with Mahathir, if the latter wants to change the system and get rid of Umno.

Mahathir, however, defended Umno for being a good party.

“Umno is not corrupt, only people in Umno are corrupted. Umno was set up in order to struggle for independence, it was led by very good people,” he said, adding that the people in Umno wanted something from the party.

The problem lies where the corrupted members joined the party to get something out of Umno, he said.

“As far as I am concerned, unless the leadership is changed, don’t expect change,” he said.

On Monday, Ambiga had explained the reason why civil society was reluctant to join forces with Mahathir, as the latter only intended to remove Najib, but not willing to see a change in the system and getting rid of Umno.

She also said if Mahathir has a bigger heart to see changes in the system, then civil society should be open to work with him.

On another note, Mahathir was reluctant to reveal his preference on the next candidate to succeed Najib as prime minister.

“I will not be choosy because I am (merely) an ordinary member,” he said, adding the new premier should be an honest person.

He then urged Umno to keep an open attitude to enrol a capable person, so that new blood could be in the next in line for party’s leadership.

“Umno is not open to new members because the old members do not want to be challenged by capable people.

“As a result, there are very few capable leaders within Umno itself,” he said.

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