

Mahathir met G25 to give anti-Najib drive multicultural flavour

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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he met the group of eminent Malaysians (G25) to overcome state propaganda that only Chinese were against Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

He said this after a Chinese group, which he did not identify, approached him to say they want to make a statement of protest against Najib.

"When Bersih had their yellow shirt demonstration, the government accused Bersih of trying to bring down a Malay government, by the Chinese (*sic*).

"(So) if this Chinese group were to protest against Najib, then the Najib government will say that these are Chinese who want to bring down a Malay government, just like they said about Bersih.

"So I told them (Chinese group), you want to do this, make it multinational, bring in the Indians and the Malays together.

"Then the government won't be able to said that you are acting because you want a Malay government to be brought down by Chinese," Mahathir told a press conference today at the Perdana Leadership Foundation Center.

Mahathir said the Chinese group agreed with him, prompting him to reach out to the G25. Now a multicultural group, G25 started as a group of Malay professionals.

"So I looked around and I saw this group of G25, they are quite rational people, there will be less accusation that they are racist.

"So I talked to them but this Tawfik came along and he has told people all kind of nonsense," said Mahathir.

Met G25 twice

He was referring to G25 member Tawfik Ismail, who said Mahathir tried to co-opt G25 in his campaign to oust Najib and proposed that a replacement be chosen by a 'council of elders'.

Mahathir said he met G25 twice, the first time because they wanted to meet him to tell about their stand on Islamic extremism.

The next time, he said, was after a Chinese group said they wanted to protest against Najib and his policy.

Tawfik, in an interview with *The Star*, said Mahathir asked if G25 would issue a statement in support of the Chinese group on the impact of political instability on the economy.

Meanwhile, asked on the Paris terror attacks, Mahathir **blamed** it on the creation of the state of Israel.

"Before that, there were no such terrorist attacks anywhere, not even in the Middle East," he said.

No discrimination

Asked on the effects of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) on the Proton industry, he criticised the pact's opacity.

"The problem is we have not been told what have been agreed upon.

"... but then Proton is already competing with foreign cars because people prefer to have a foreign car rather than a local (one)," said Mahathir.

He said it was important that under TPPA there should be no discrimination between local products and imported ones.

He added that there should also be no discrimination between local and foreign contractors.

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