

Dr M: We would like to see Umno-PAS merge, but...
MalaysiaKini.com
Dec 18th, 2015

Dr Mahathir Mohamad has no qualms about a potential merger between Umno and its arch rival PAS.

However, the former prime minister said, the problem is with the Umno leadership.

"We would like it if there is a merger between Umno and PAS, but the problem is with Umno's leadership," Mahathir is quoted as saying by *The Startoday*.

He said this when asked to comment on the "friendly exchanges" between Umno president Najib Abdul Razak and PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang

Mahathir has been on the warpath against Najib, warning Umno that it might be defeated in the next election if Najib remained at the helm of the party.

He has accused Najib, who is prime minister and finance minister, of numerous misdeeds with regard to 1MDB and the RM2.6 billion political donation.

Najib has denied any wrongdoing and claimed there is a conspiracy to topple him.

Yesterday, the prime minister and Hadi shared the same stage at the Regional Conference for Al-Azhar graduates in Kuala Lumpur.

In his speech, Najib reiterated his call for greater Muslim unity between different political groups.

Earlier, Hadi said differences in political ideologies should not be an obstacle for Muslims to forge closer ties.

However, not all in PAS are receptive to the idea of a partnership with Umno.

Among the more vocal critics is vice-president Iskandar Samad, who urged Najib to stop daydreaming about such a scenario.

Iskandar claimed that Umno has committed a slew of "sins" against PAS members and supporters, which cannot be forgiven or forgotten.

Iskandar appears certain that the Islamic party's grassroots would spurn such a move.

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Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/323843>