

Mahathir and four MPs sat on independent bench in Parliament, says

Marzuki

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Kow Gah Chie

Bersatu chairperson Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his faction of MPs have attended the May 18 Dewan Rakyat sitting as independent lawmakers rather than as opposition MPs, said the party's ex-secretary-general Marzuki Yahya.

"I think Tun (Mahathir) sat at the independent bench," he told Malaysiakini when contacted, adding the five will continue to choose the neutral and independent bench in future Parliament sittings.

"This is a normal thing to do as we support Pakatan Harapan but we are not (seen as) part of the coalition," he said.

"We are independent and neutral but supporting Harapan," said Marzuki.

He reiterated that Bersatu had never made a decision to quit Harapan nor join Perikatan Nasional (PN).

As such, he stressed that Mahathir did not go against the party's stand in taking the independent and neutral bench at the Dewan Rakyat.

Earlier today, Bersatu Supreme Council member Wan Saiful Wan Jan issued a media statement where he called out five Bersatu MPs who sat with the opposition during the Dewan Rakyat sitting on May 18 as should have lost their membership.

Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal also called for the sacking of those who insisted to be part of Harapan.

Wan Ahmad said action should be taken under Article 10.2.3 of the party's constitution, which deals with party members joining another political party.

The four MPs with Mahathir are Mukhriz Mahathir (Jerlun), Amiruddin Hamzah (Kubang Pasu), Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman (Muar) and Maszlee Malik (Simpang Renggam).

"Tun did not join another party. Do they understand the Article 10.2.3 at all ?" said the former deputy foreign minister.

Earlier today, Sin Chew Daily quoted the party's Election Committee chairperson Syed Hamid Albar as reaffirming the decision of the Registrar of Societies (ROS) that Mahathir was not the Bersatu chairperson.

Syed Hamid explained that despite Mahathir's second tenure as party chairperson, it has yet to be effective pending party election result.

He said Bersatu was unable to set a new date for the party election as ROS had suspended all organisation activities to June 30 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bersatu initially slated to hold the division assembly simultaneously nationwide in April.

Marzuki acknowledged that Mahathir's tenure was still not in effect.

"Yes, I agree with Syed Hamid. Yes, (Tun's) position is not finalised, but that also included the position of the party president, deputy and vice president and supreme council member position," he said.

"Not finalised due to the ongoing party election (which being postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic)," he said.

The Bersatu AGM, which was also scheduled to be held from June 15 to 28, is also postponed.

Mahathir won uncontested as party chairperson in March while the Prime Minister and party president Muhyiddin Yassin was challenged by Mukhriz, the then deputy president.

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