

## **MP SPEAKS | Yes, it is true that Dr M wanted to sack Yeo Bee Yin**

**Commission**

**Malaysiakini**

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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad had pledged at the United Nations General Assembly to ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All (Icerd) based on recommendations made by then foreign minister Saifuddin Abdullah.

This was according to former deputy defence minister Liew Chin Tong's latest book titled Lim Kit Siang: Patriot. Leader. Fighter.

The account in the book was in contrast to Saifuddin's position that he was not responsible for the failed ratification of Icerd, which blew up into racial issues and undermined the then Pakatan Harapan government.

Saifuddin had instead attributed the Icerd endeavour, which was overseen by his ministry at the time, to Mahathir's speech made at the UN general assembly in 2018 and also Harapan's manifesto.

However, Liew suggested that Mahathir gave his speech because of Saifuddin.

"Based on the recommendation of foreign minister Saifuddin, the prime minister announced at the UN general assembly on Sept 28 that Malaysia would be a signatory of Icerd," he said.

Previously, Lembah Pantai MP Fahmi Fadzil had also pointed out that the Harapan manifesto made no mention of Icerd.

It merely pledged to ratify international conventions that were deemed suitable.

Liew said following Mahathir's announcement, even Umno leaders such as Khairy Jamaluddin, who is seen as a progressive leader, took a racial angle.

"In an immediate reaction, purportedly progressive Umno leader Khairy was the first to portray the UN convention as one that was threatening the Malays," he said.

Liew added that Umno and PAS used the issue to form the Muafakat Nasional coalition and latched on to it even after Mahathir had backtracked in November.

Malay conservatives were worried that Malaysia's need to commit to equality

under Icerd would undermine bumiputera special privileges.

This was despite Icerd allowing countries to include exemption clauses when they ratify the convention.

The then opposition rode on the issue to galvanise support against the Harapan government, which marked the start of a downhill direction for its Malay support.

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