

Apologise or be sued - Zahid dared to prove Dr M 'not Malay'

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Bernama

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dared Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to prove assertions that the former is not a Malay.

The nonagenarian said he will also sue the Bagan Datuk MP if the latter does not apologise for making the defamatory claim.

"I challenge Zahid to show proof that my identity as a Malay is in dispute.

"If he does not apologise and retract the slander, I will take legal action," he said in a statement today.

Mahathir was referring to remarks Zahid made in 2017 when, as home minister, he dredged up a purported copy of the former's identity card (IC), which stated his name as "Mahathir a/l Iskandar Kutty".

"So he (Mahathir) was right when he said Malays are forgetful, because he is the son of Iskandar Kutty.

"This is the person who fought for the Malay agenda in order to use Malays," Zahid had said.

The patronym "a/l" (short for "anak lelaki", meaning "son of") is commonly used by Indian Malaysians, although it is also used by some indigenous groups. "Kutty" is a common Tamil name.

Malay male names normally carry the "bin" title instead, which is the Arabic term meaning "son of".

Constitutionally Malay

Mahathir, in a post on social media today, said his birth certificate and identity card both state his name is Mahathir bin Mohamad, and said Zahid has never produced evidence to prove otherwise.

"Zahid made the claim (my name was Mahathir a/l Iskandar Kutty) to accuse me of being Indian and using the Malays during my 22 years as prime minister," he said.

He reiterated that he has never denied having Indian ancestry.

However, he stressed that his parents were both born in Malaya before Merdeka, and that the family spoke Malay and practised Malay culture.

Hence, he said he fulfilled all constitutional requirements as per Article 160 to be a Malay.

Mahathir revived the 2017 issue in response to Zahid's defamation suit against him.

Umno president Zahid is suing Pejuang chairperson Mahathir over the latter's claim that Zahid met him to try and get on his good side as Zahid anticipated he would be facing criminal charges.

Mahathir, at a press conference in February, claimed this took place before he took office in 2018 but when it was clear he would become prime minister.

However, in his post today, Mahathir said this happened when he was prime minister.

Mahathir in his post described Zahid as a compulsive liar.

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