

'See you in court': Zahid tells Mahathir

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Hariz Mohd

Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today said that he would answer in court all the allegations made by former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who claimed that he had met the former prime minister five times to discuss the former's criminal cases.

This comes after Mahathir said in a court affidavit that Zahid came to see him five times between 2018 and 2020 and attached excerpts of his daily schedules to prove his claim.

"It's okay. I will see him in court," Zahid told Malaysiakini when met outside the Shah Alam High Court this afternoon.

The Bagan Datuk MP was there to attend a criminal trial where he is facing 40 graft charges in relation to the government's Foreign Visa System, or VLN.

It was reported that Zahid is suing Mahathir over the latter's statement in a press conference on Feb 23 this year, where he claimed that Zahid had met him to try and get on his good side as the latter anticipated being jailed for corruption.

Following this, Mahathir, on May 17, filed an affidavit in reply to Zahid's suit, in which he provided more details of the alleged meetings, including dates and his daily schedules on the said dates.

Mahathir said Zahid had met him on June 7, 2018, Sept 13, 2018, and once a day from Feb 23 to Feb 25, 2020.

He said Zahid had expressed concern over his court cases during those meetings.

'I leave it to Mahathir'

Meanwhile, Zahid also gave a nonchalant response to Mahathir's threat to sue him over his remark in 2017, where Zahid asserted that Mahathir is not a Malay.

The Langkawi MP had dared Zahid to prove that he is not a Malay and he would sue the Umno leader if he did not apologise for the defamatory remark.

"I leave it to him (if he wants to sue)," the Umno president told Malaysiakini.

Zahid had made the remark 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," he said.

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

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

Mahathir 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.

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