

## **'Govt leader' should be arrested for sedition, Mahathir strikes back**

**Malaysiakini**

**22 March 2023**

**Yoursay**

Without mentioning Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's name, Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is the government leader who should be arrested for sedition.

He was responding to former Umno lawmaker Nazri Abdul Aziz who wanted the 97-year-old politician to face the music under the Sedition Act for allegedly sowing hatred against the government.

Taking to Twitter, Mahathir reiterated his criticisms against the government, whom he has blamed for several venues cancelling the booking for his public gathering to launch a proclamation on the issues confronting the Malays.

"This bias against the Malays is a manifestation of the racism of the government. It is sedition because it is against the constitution of our country," he said in arguing that the leader of the government should be arrested.

On Monday, Malaysiakini revealed how the former prime minister had taken

Anwar's warning of zero tolerance against those who fan racial and religious flames out of context.

Mahathir also responded to the opposition who pointed the finger at him for the security crackdown dubbed "Operasi Lalang" which witnessed more than 100 politicians, activists and others detained without trial in 1987.

Although the official reason for the dragnet was to prevent racial tensions from escalating, the former prime minister's critics have accused him of using the draconian Internal Security Act (ISA) to stifle dissent.

"The parties in Pakatan Harapan had always blamed me for Ops Lalang. But when it served their objectives, they very gladly accepted me as a colleague and also as the candidate to be their prime minister," Mahathir said.

As before, he repeated his denial of ordering the mass arrests despite being prime minister and noted how the then inspector-general of police Hanif Omar had confirmed this.

The Ops Lalang issue resurfaced when Mahathir accused Anwar of being dictatorial over the public gathering, prompting various quarters to argue that the nonagenarian did not have the right to make such allegations given his

chequered past.

In a bid to showcase his purported tolerant leadership, Mahathir recalled that when he had sacked Anwar as his deputy in 1998, the latter was not prevented from holding demonstrations.

“During the time I was the fourth prime minister, Anwar had weekly demonstrations. I did not stop him,” he said.

However, Anwar, who was given the marching orders on Sept 2, 1998, was detained under ISA 18 days later.

Anwar was subsequently produced in court nursing a black eye. A Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) later found that then-national police chief Rahim Noor had assaulted him in detention.

Speaking about this incident in 2018 after Mahathir and Anwar forged a short-lived alliance, the former premier said he was livid when informed of the matter.

However, in 1998, Mahathir had suggested that the injury could have been self-inflicted.

**Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd**

Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/659639>