

**Mahathir willing to testify at Ling's trial**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**August 03, 2010**

If he is called as a witness, former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is willing to testify at Dr Ling Liong Sik's cheating trial where the former is charged with misleading the cabinet in 2002.

"If (a person is) required to testify in court, he must do so [...] cannot say 'I don't want'," Mahathir told reporters at the sidelines of the launching of Yayasan Universiti Petronas in Kuala Lumpur today.

However, he could not confirm if his cabinet had indeed been misled by Ling, who, according to the charge sheet, had convinced the cabinet in 2002 to approve the purchase of land meant for Port Klang Free Zone at a higher price.

"I don't know if he has misled the cabinet or not. He has only been charged. I don't know if he is guilty or not," he said.

azlanTo another question on steps which could be taken to ensure that cabinet would not be easily misled, Mahathir smiled and replied: "Lots of things happen which the cabinet don't know of."

Ultimately, said Mahathir, the prime minister would be responsible for any decisions made by the cabinet. "But there are limits to this responsibility as there are lots of things the prime minister does not know," he said.

This will not be the first time that Mahathir testifies in an open inquiry.

Alternative charge offered

The last time he was called was for the 2008 royal commission of inquiry to investigate the VK Lingam tape scandal where he was evasive in answering the questions asked.

Throughout his testimony, Mahathir's response to several questions was that he could not remember or recall enough to answer them.

azlanLast Thursday, former MCA president and transport minister Ling was charged under Section 418 of the Penal Code w misleading the cabinet between Sept 25 and Nov 6, 2002.

He had allegedly misled cabinet into agreeing to purchase 999.5 acres of land on Pulau Indah for a the PKFZ project, at a price of RM25psf on a deferred payment basis for a 15-year period, at a 7.5 percent interest rate.

The cumulative interest paid would total RM720 million at the end of the repayment period.

He was also offered an alternative charge, under Section 417 of the Penal Code, for the same offence.

Ling pleaded not guilty to both charges. The case has been fixed for mention on Sept 3.

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