

Ex-No 1 Umno member continues attack on PM
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A day after he quit the party which he has been a member since its foundation 62 years ago, Dr Mahathir Mohamad continued his attack against his successor-turned-nemesis, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.
MCPX

mahathir and umnoIn his latest salvo, the former prime minister zeroed in on Iraq's oil-for-food scandal which had embroiled his ex-deputy, Abdullah, four years ago.

In a blog posting today, Mahathir had demanded to know whether Abdullah's involvement in the scandal constituted "lobbying, corruption or abuse of power".

In 2004, Malaysiakini revealed several Malaysians, including one 'Abdullah Badawi', had gained illegal financial benefit from deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in an illicit deal involving the United Nations-administered oil-for-food programme.

abdullah ahmad badawi and oil for foodAccording to the 2004 report by the United States' Iraq Survey Group, Abdullah was given vouchers in 2000 to sell two million barrels of Iraqi oil. It was estimated that the profit could be as high as 65 cents per barrel.

It added that Abdullah - through a company called Tradeyear - had sold 1,949,900 barrels, making a tidy profit of as much as US\$1.3 million.

Also named in the report was state-owned oil company Petronas, a former Malaysian ambassador, two other Malaysian companies and an Iraqi, who was described as an immigrant to Malaysia.

Abdullah had denied knowledge of the scam, arguing that he as deputy premier then had written letters of recommendations for his in-laws.

Close relatives implicated

A year later, another report said it found 'no evidence' that Abdullah had profited from the programme, but it nevertheless implicated two of his close relatives.

The duo were identified as Faek Ahmad Shareef and Noor Asiah Mahmood.

Faek, an Iraqi immigrant, was married to Abdullah's sister-in-law - a sister of the premier's late wife, Endon Mahmood - but the couple had divorced later. Meanwhile, Noor Asiah is another Endon's sister.

It claimed that the duo via a Malaysian trading company called Mastek, paid a whopping US\$10 million to Saddam's regime for the single largest oil allocation under the UN-administered oil-for-food programme.

"Supposing a deputy prime minister writes a letter of recommendation for his sister-in-law to an official or minister of another country who could be expected to take a serious view of the recommendation because the writer is a deputy prime minister of a friendly country and

the recommendation is for his sister-in-law, does this constitute lobbying, or corruption or abuse of power," asked Mahathir.

"We need to know if they were written before, can action be taken against them now since we are now taking action on things which happened in the past."

Mahathir appeared to refer to the Lingam Tape Royal Commission report which last week recommended that the former premier and five others should be investigated for their role in a judicial fixing scandal.

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