

Palanivel: Dr M should remember his own roots
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MIC deputy president G Palanivel today slammed former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad for accusing party chief S Samy Vellu of being a racist and warned such statements could fan deeper racial sentiments.
MCPX

samy vellu pc 120308 palanivelIn a statement released today, Palanivel (photo, right) also said that the former prime minister's comments on Hindraf were inaccurate and insensitive to the sentiment of Indians in the country.

"It is sad to note that Mahathir is not aware of the fact that Hindraf is not only made of Tamil people but includes many non-Tamil and even non-Hindus.

"He (Mahathir) is wrong when he said Hindraf leaders only represent Tamil racists," said Palanivel in defence to Samy Vellu who has recently joined in the bandwagon in advocating for the release of five Hindraf leaders detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

Palanivel delivered a stinging rebuke to the former premier by advising Mahathir "to remember his own roots" before making such statements.

While Palanivel did not elaborate on this, he is likely to be referring to Mahathir's forefathers, who are from South India.

It is widely believed that Mahathir's father, a school teacher, had migrated to Malaysia from the southern Indian state of Kerala and subsequently married a Malay woman.

He has 'lost sight of the big picture'

The MIC man also added that Mahathir has "lost sight of the big picture" in his efforts to wage a war against the current prime minister and Samy Vellu.

"People have become more politically aware and Mahathir should know how people read him. He should not make unsubstantiated statements that are reckless and careless in nature," he said.

hindraf british petition rally 251107 uthayakumar maya hotelPalanivel added that the civil society was championing for "more freedom" together and people of other races also believe that the "ISA is proscriptive and hinders the process of democracy".

"To pick on any one race and say that such a request is racist is simply causing mischief.

"Past leaders and leaders who have lost their positions are busy apportioning blame on why Barisan lost and in doing so they are confusing both supporters and non-supporters," he stressed.

According to the MIC leader, BN should focus on bringing the Indian votes back to the ruling coalition.

"Using rhetoric to subtly cover their self-interest is not going to work because people have now become more politically aware," he added.

Dr M: Hindraf represents Tamil racists

In a blog post yesterday, Mahathir chided Samy Vellu for campaigning alongside DAP chairperson Karpal Singh and former UN special rapporteur Param Cumaraswamy in calling him (Dr Mahathir) a racist.

Mahathir criticised Samy Vellu for coveting the government to release Hindraf leaders from ISA despite the fact that Hindraf represented Tamil racists whose motives were akin to Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka.

"In sympathising with Hindraf, Samy exposes his deep racist sentiments," said Mahathir

"They must know that Hindraf represents Tamil racists who still look to their old masters, the British, to protect them. They don't believe in Malaysian institutions," he added.

"They speak not just of Indians but of Tamils as a separate race. They and their apologists are racist to the core," he stressed in his blog post.

Mahathir also said that back when he was the prime minister, Samy Vellu insisted that he was the only leader of the Indians.

"He refused to allow other Indian political parties to join the Barisan Nasional. His arrogance was unbearable. The defeat of the Malaysian Indian Congress is entirely because of him," he said.

Mahathir promises more to come

Mahathir promised to affix extracts from Samy Vellu in his future entries so that readers can then "judge what kind of Indian the Indians have as their leader".

This is not the first time Mahathir has blamed Samy Vellu for failing the Indian community.

Previously he blamed the MIC boss of stifling Indian voices in a Malaysiakini interview just before the March 8 general election.

The Indian voters totally rejected MIC in the last general election by even ejecting Samy Vellu from his Sungai Siput parliamentary seat, a seat which he had held since 1974.

The party managed to win only three parliamentary and seven state seats. It contested in nine parliamentary and 19 state seats.

As a result Samy Vellu had to relinquish his ministerial post. Palanivel was also among the party's big losers.