

Dr Mahathir blasts Umno for accepting tainted reps
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad has blasted the Umno leadership for 'stooping low' in accepting two former PKR assemblypersons who have been charged with corruption.

Mahathir, who led the party for more than two decades, said Umno was already plagued by a corruption problem.

"With the recent defection of the two, it would further hurt Umno's image which is already tainted now. Abdullah (Ahmad Badawi) as Umno president should rethink before accepting people like this," added the 82-year-old former premier in his blog posting.

Mahathir was responding to reports that former PKR assemblypersons Jamaluddin Mat Radzi (Behrang) and Osman Jailu (Changkat Jering) have quit.

This evening, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced that the duo will remain as Independents, but 'friendly to Barisan Nasional'.

Is Umno so desperate?

"However, the two (Jamaluddin and Osman) had been charged with corruption," lamented Mahathir.

"Is Umno so desperate until it is not willing to wait until the court's decision before accepting them. If Umno accepts them now, and they are found not guilty then the Umno-led government would be accused of influencing the courts."

"Whether this was right or wrong is not the question. In the eyes of the public, the charge is believable and would have an impact on the next general election," he said.

Mahathir said in the past Umno and BN had tried to curb party hopping by requiring each of its candidate to sign an undated resignation letter which would be handed to the Speaker when there was evidence they may be jumping ship.

"Unfortunately, this is not legal under the law. If they want to leave the party, they should give in their own letters which they signed to be handed directly to the Speaker.

"I believe that such undated letters would be rejected by the Speaker. They would remain as an elected assemblyperson despite hopping to another party or being independent," he said.