

Pas slams 'confused' Dr M for his political rhetoric
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PAS leaders have returned fire at former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad for accusing their party of being "Malay political opportunists", calling him "confused" and slamming him for dividing the country along racial lines.

"Tun Dr Mahathir is a confused Muslim who has failed to differentiate between Islam and the Malays. During his reign, Islam was ridiculed and he bred Malay chauvinism and racism," PAS MP for Buit Gantang Nizar Jamaluddin told Malaysia Chronicle.

Indeed, Mahathir - who ruled Malaysia with a fist of iron from 1981 to 2003 - did send out conflicting signals at a Perkim breaking-fast function on Tuesday night. Perkim is the Muslim Welfare Organization of Malaysia.

While the feisty 85-year old exhorted Muslims to unite or face the possibility of losing political dominance, only hours earlier he had lambasted PAS in his blog, accusing the Islamist party of being insincere by not putting the Malay agenda at the top of its struggle.

"This is exactly what is wrong with Umno and BN. We cannot divide and classify the country along racial lines. PAS is first and foremost an Islamic party and it defend the rights of the Malays along with the rights of Chinese, the Indians, the Kadazan-Dusun-Murut and all other citizens as well," PAS national unity chairman Mujahid Yusoff Rawa told Malaysia Chronicle.

"This is what Islam is about - love for the Almighty, justice and fairness. But Mahathir's version is only about who rules the country at whatever means and costs and nothing else. That is Umno Islam. Regretfully, for as long as BN is in power, racial politics will mark the day and the people will remain divided. After 53 years, Umno has failed to unite the Muslims and the Malays - what more the country."

Of late, public sentiment has been turning against Mahathir with Malaysians blaming him for much of the social and financial problems currently swamping the nation.

Despite his claims of a bountiful legacy, having built most of Malaysia's sprawling network of expressways and modern infrastructure, his critics including prominent economists believe that the nation would have progressed much better with another leader at the helm.

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