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Stop caustic comments, Dr M urged

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KUALA LUMPUR: Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi wants former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed to stop making comments that threatened Umno.

In a message he sent via SMS to the *New Sunday Times*, Zahid said: "When I was Umno youth chief (from 1996 to 1998), Dr Mahathir told me not to throw stones at a glass house.

"The glass house was Umno and the stones were the issues that I had brought up.

"I just want to remind Dr Mahathir of the warning that he issued to me and other members at the time.

"Now, it is Dr Mahathir who's hurling a giant boulder towards that glass house which is Umno. He doesn't want to just crack the walls.

He seems intent on shattering the structure into a million pieces.

"Wouldn't it be more appropriate for a statesman like himself to use tact?"

"His words are like a time-bomb, one that can be used by the opposition to destroy Umno from the inside while at the same time, they attempt to destroy Umno from the outside.

"My respect for Dr Mahathir has never diminished, but at the same time, I wish to tell him that it's not too late for him to remember what he said to me when he was in power."

Zahid said he also wanted to remind Dr Mahathir of another one of his own phrases which he often told his followers: "Melayu mudah lupa" (Malays forget easily).

Meanwhile, Bera Umno division head Datuk Ismail Sabri

Yaakob, who is also youth and sports minister, said Dr Mahathir should help to rehabilitate Umno after the dismal performance by the Barisan Nasional in the general election on March 8 instead of continuing to issue statements that can divide Umno.

"Tun Dr Mahathir should play a role in assisting to rehabilitate Umno, help the Umno president instead of making criticisms and asking Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to step down.

"Dr Mahathir should not criticise the candidacy for the president's post, the quota system, bonus votes and the supreme council. The quota system, for example, started when Dr Mahathir was Umno president," he told reporters after attending a gathering to celebrate his appointment as a

cabinet minister at the Bera Rakan Muda complex here yesterday.

He said there was no need for Dr Mahathir to continue to criticise the top leadership because Umno members at the grassroots could determine the question of the party's presidential election through the democratic process.

On the extraordinary general meeting, Ismail Sabri, who is also the member of parliament for Bera, said it was not necessary because the Umno general assembly had already been scheduled for December.

He said the Bera Umno division fully supported Abdullah to continue to lead Umno and the government, and Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak as Umno deputy president and deputy prime minister.