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## Karpal amused by statement

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** DAP chairman Karpal Singh said he was amused by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that he was joking during a cabinet meeting when he quoted Shakespeare as saying: "The first thing we do, we hang the lawyers."

"What he said was not a joke, he meant every word of it because he has a phobia about lawyers," he said.

In a letter to *the Sun* yesterday, Dr Mahathir said lawyers "were angry with me" because he had quoted the phrase.

"I was only joking, but they heard of it and believed I meant what I said. The judges also felt unhappy with me."

Karpal, a senior lawyer, said Dr Mahathir repeated his feelings about lawyers on Feb 2, 2000 at a meet-the-students session in London.

He was alleged to have said that it was his private wish to "hang" errant lawyers, especially Karpal.

In the letter, Dr Mahathir accused Karpal and Datuk Param Cumaraswamy, also a senior lawyer, of a "hatred" for him that had "not abated even after I am no longer prime minister".

He was responding to a letter by Param, who asked that he be investigated for allegedly interfering in an Anti-Corruption Agency investigation while he was in power.

Param, in turn, was responding to an earlier letter by Dr Mahathir, in which he maintained that no apology was necessary for the 1988 judicial crisis.

Karpal said following his retirement in 2003 and having handed the mantle of government to Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Dr Mahathir should have refrained from political activity.

He said Dr Mahathir's public outbursts against Abdullah amounted to indiscipline.

"Rightly, Dr Mahathir should be referred to the Umno disciplinary committee."