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# Salleh welcomes Zaid's bid for judicial reform

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Former lord president Tun Salleh Abas has welcomed Datuk Zaid Ibrahim's proposal that the government apologise to him and the judges sacked in 1988.

He said he was also hopeful that Zaid could restore judicial powers and make the appointment and promotion of judges more transparent.

In an interview in the *New Sunday Times*, Zaid, the minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of law, said his first priority would be to propose the apology.

"I welcome the effort Zaid is making," Salleh said.

The former lord president has received a pension since his sacking "but not a full pension".

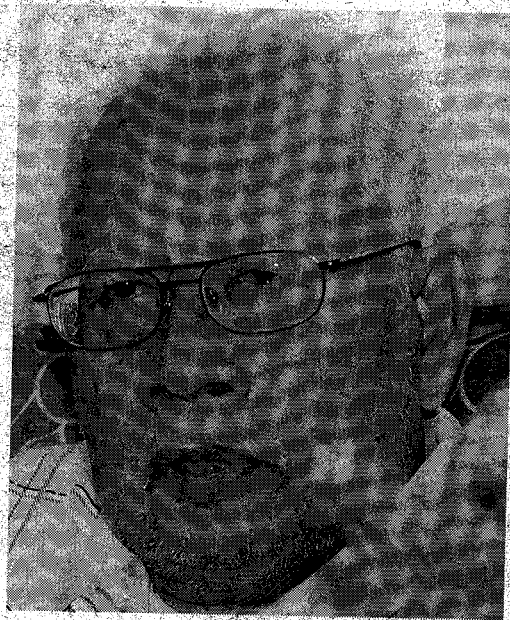
Does he hope that after such an apology, his full pension would be restored?

"I leave it entirely to the government," he said. "I am at the centre of this controversy."

When he broke his 18-year silence in 2006, Salleh had called for a review of ministerial powers.

Ouster clauses in legislation such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act and the Police Act, he said, provide that "any decision of the minister shall be final and cannot be questioned by the court."

Judicial authority should be returned to the courts, he had urged, noting that in 1988, Article 121 of the Federal Constitution had been amended so that this power, originally vested in the high courts, is



Tun Salleh Abas hopes Datuk Zaid Ibrahim can restore judicial powers

now restricted to "such jurisdiction and powers as may be conferred by or under federal law".

"I hope Zaid will do something about it. He's outspoken and will be a good minister."

In the Sunday interview, Zaid also said he was suggesting the establishment of a judicial appointments commission.

"I am hopeful for a judicial commission and would welcome it," Salleh said.

Salleh was sacked in August 1988 after writing a letter to the King on behalf of the judges, expressing disappointment with accusations made by then prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Five judges of the federal court (then known as the supreme court) who had granted him an interlocutory

order against the tribunal headed by his successor were also suspended in July that year, but three of them were reinstated in October.

The other two, Datuk Seri George Seah and Tan Sri Suleiman Pawanteh, were sacked.

In March 1989, Seah, Wan Suleiman and two of the reinstated judges, Tan Sri Mohamed Azmi Kamaruddin and Tan Sri Eusoffe Abdoolcader, were bestowed the Seri Paduka Jiwa Mahkota Kelantan (SJMK) First Class (honorary) award by the Sultan of Kelantan while the other reinstated judge, Tan Sri Wan Hamzah Mohamed Salleh, received the SMJK First Class with the title "Datuk".