

DATE: 23 / 5 / 2008

# Shahrir: Dr Mahathir has lost right to criticise Umno

NST- 23 / 5 / 2008

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad has lashed out at former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad over remarks Dr Mahathir made of him.

He said the former Umno president had lost his right to criticise the party he once led "because he is no longer a member".

Dr Mahathir had criticised Shahrir and Tun Musa Hitam in his blog yesterday.

Dr Mahathir used a Malay idiom, which is equivalent to "the pot calling the kettle black", to describe Shahrir and Musa for their criticism of him on his decision to quit Umno.

He reminded Musa that he

too "had been a thorn" in 1986 and 1987, accusing him of resigning as deputy prime minister and deputy party president in an effort to oust him.

"Such was your hatred for me that you were willing to contest as deputy president in support of your rival Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah for president. It seems you still want to topple me," he added.

In reply, Musa said Dr Mahathir was entitled to his own opinion.

"It is up to the people to make up their own minds."

Dr Mahathir had also questioned whether Musa was still an Umno member, to which Musa said he was a member of the Segamat division.

Dr Mahathir also rapped Shahrir for quitting the party

and standing against Umno in a by-election and using the "key" symbol.

Despite all the criticisms against Umno, Shahrir was accepted back to the party, Dr Mahathir said.

"If not for Tun Musa's sister who begged me to allow you back into Umno, you would have been a thorn for longer."

In reply, Shahrir said unlike Dr Mahathir, he had not left the party but was refused entry into Umno Baru when it was formed in 1988.

"I suppose I was (being a thorn) because I could not come back to the party."

He added that since he was not allowed to become a member of Umno Baru, he resigned as member of Parliament for Johor Baru and in the ensuing

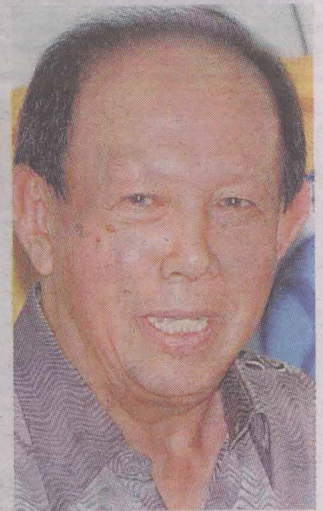
by-election, contested as an independent against an Umno candidate and won.

"My contesting the by-election was purely over his leadership... it was a resounding victory," he said, adding that the victory eventually became the basis in opening up Umno for all Malays, which also saw him becoming an Umno member a year later.

"I will never leave Umno... it was already difficult to come back (then)," he said.

Shahrir said his differences with Dr Mahathir was probably due to the fact that the two of them had different styles.

"He could not say that I was a bad minister (in his cabinet as federal territories minister). He may not like my style but the people did."



Tun Musa Hitam says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is entitled to his own opinion