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Zam: Dr M to blame, too

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'Ex-PM's accusations swayed people to vote against BN'

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad must shoulder some of the blame for Barisan Nasional's worst-ever performance in the recent general election, says former Information Minister Datuk Seri Zainuddin Maidin.

Dr Mahathir's various accusations swayed the people to vote against Barisan, he said.

"Laying all blame on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for Barisan's losses is not right because it is clear that Dr Mahathir is full of anger and uncontrolled vengeance," said Zainuddin.

"Maybe he was not aware or maybe he purposely did not want to be aware that his credibility as a former leader is still strong and

that his influence on the grassroots, both Malay and non-Malays, is significant."

"His credibility influenced people into believing what he said and he also lent this credibility to bloggers and websites," he said when met at his house here yesterday.

Zainuddin said there were three statements in particular that affected Umno's and Malaysians' confidence in the leadership in the run-up to the elections.

"The first was when he said he regretted appointing Abdullah as the Prime Minister.

"This was then followed up by Dr Mahathir saying that Abdullah was only meant to be a one-term Prime Minister and that more opposition

was needed in Parliament."

Zainuddin added that the third and most damning statement that was widely accepted by all segments of society was about the role Deputy Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin and his advisers played in the country's politics and economy.

"This even caused Gerakan adviser Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik to ask Abdullah to get rid of his advisers," he said.

Zainuddin said he was merely telling the truth when he said that Dr Mahathir could not deny he had played a role in Barisan's dismal poll results.

"This is not to say that other factors do not count, but Dr Mahathir cannot absolve himself from this.

»His credibility influenced people into believing what he said«

DATUK SERI
ZAINUDDIN MAIDIN



"There have been many opinions in the aftermath of the election but Dr Mahathir being a factor was not really mentioned," he added.