

THE SUN

DATE: 10/3/2008

Abdullah should resign, says Dr M

Man...
gives his
views on
Abdullah's
status at
his Kuala
Lumpur
home early
yesterday.

The sun - 10/3/2008

KUALA LUMPUR:

Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi should resign to take full responsibility for Barisan Nasional's massive losses in the general election.

"I think he should accept responsibility for this, just as in 2004, the huge victory was reportedly due to him, 100%, and that was said by the then secretary-general of Umno," Mahathir told a news conference hours after the polls results were announced.

"But now also he should accept 100 per cent responsibility. He has destroyed Umno, he has destroyed BN, and he should be responsible of this massive defeat."

Mahathir said it was shocking that the BN had been trounced in five states and the Federal Territory because of the same signal sent by all the three major races - Malay, Chinese and Indian.

"I think the Japanese would have committed *harakiri*. But I think Malays are not up to this yet. I think he should consider stepping down," he said, adding that he would have done the same thing if he was in

Abdullah's shoes now.

To a question on whether the BN had miscalculated in holding the general election early, Mahathir said he doubted that postponing it another year would make any difference in terms of results, as "the people's dissatisfaction against Abdullah's administration was already boiling over."

"Four years after the last election, he has done so many things which were wrong but these people (media) keep on reporting how the people loved him," he said.

Issues leading to the dissatisfaction against the government included the perception that despite high figures on economic growth announced by the government as well as the launch of development corridors, the people on the ground did not feel anything (its benefits).

"They have observed that this government is run by one family for the family. As long as you have that kind of arrangement where family takes precedence over the cabinet, over the government itself, I think people would want to go against them," he said.

Answering another

question, he said it was up to Umno to decide on his successor should the latter step down, or probably Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak could take over.

"Datuk Seri Najib has scored an amazing victory, more than the 2004 result when it was the best year for BN. His majority increased while Abdullah's decreased quite significantly," he said.

Mahathir said a government formed with a simple majority was a weak government, especially in a multi-racial country which could cause instability, among others, and later affect investors' confidence.

He, however, said there was hope yet for the BN to rectify the damage, provided it took note of the signal sent by the people.

To another question, Mahathir said he believed it would be difficult for Abdullah to step down voluntarily as, until now, Abdullah still did not comprehend the ramifications of the losses and put the blame of the defeat on the people instead.

Expressing his sadness over the losses, the former premier said he did not expect BN to lose to such an extent. - Bernama