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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad **shaking hands** with former Pas life member Zainon Ismail. Pic by Ahmad Irham Mohd Noor

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Would-be assassin says sorry to Dr M

PUTRAJAYA: After 15 years, former Pas life member Zainon Ismail yesterday finally apologised to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for being involved in a plot to assassinate the former prime minister.

Zainon and several Pas ulama had a meeting with Dr Mahathir yesterday. They also announced that they would fully support Barisan Nasional's fight.

The group said they accepted that they were wrong to doubt Dr Mahathir and wrong to go against BN.

Zainon, who went by the moniker

CN Afghani, was well-known for plans to kill Dr Mahathir in 1998 and had openly declared him a *kafir*. Those who followed BN were also *kafir* to Zainon at the time.

"We have come to learn that some of the things that we fought for were wrong, and that what Tun (Dr Mahathir) had done before was right. I apologise for the threat to kill him and for calling him *kafir*."

He said Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang had admitted that there was nothing wrong with the Constitution, despite his all-out

war against the Constitution which he called a "colonialist" one.

Zainon claimed Hadi at the time had also wanted to apologise but was too proud to do so.

He was accompanied by nine representatives from non-governmental organisations such as Persatuan Minda Pondok, Ikatan Cendekiawan Islam Kelantan and Ummati, or Selamat Tinggal Pas.

He said the group had arranged to meet Dr Mahathir last year.

Dr Mahathir said he accepted their apologies completely and did

not hold it against them.

"When people intend to bury the hatchet, we accept without any condition. That is how it is done. They have realised their mistakes and I have nothing against them."

Dr Mahathir said these people had gotten close to the leaders and could see for themselves there were flaws in the principles they stood for.

"Several opposition members had already apologised to me after they realised that they were mistaken. I never asked them to, but I am thankful that they did."