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# Najib: Dr M betrayed Malays

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**'TURNED HIS BACK':**  
He let down party members who stood by him during crises, says Umno president

KUALA LUMPUR

UMNO president Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has betrayed the Malays, the country and the party, whose struggles he once championed.

He said Dr Mahathir had turned his back on the party he once led by cooperating with DAP and its allies, supporting the Bersih rally and the country's enemies.

Najib said he and Umno's rank and file were disappointed with Dr Mahathir's action as it was the party's faithful who stood by the latter during past crises.

"Dr Mahathir was once a prominent statesman, but he has turned his back on the party he led for many decades.

"It is not too much to say that the leader we once supported is now involved in actions that are loathed. He is cooperating with DAP, illegal Bersih rally, Parti Amanah Negara, PKR and worse, working with the country's enemies, such as (American billionaire George) Soros, who we once hated as a currency speculator.

"This is the ultimate betrayal to Umno, the race and the country," Najib said in his policy speech at the Umno general assembly at Putra World Trade Centre here yesterday.

Noting that Umno members had remained loyal to Dr Mahathir during the Team A and B issue in the



Umno president **Datuk Seri Najib Razak**, vice-president **Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi** and permanent chairman **Tan Sri Badruddin Amiruddin** are all smiles as they listen to a debate on the party president's policy speech at the Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday. Pic by Abdullah Yusof

1987 party polls, Najib said he could remember how the episode badly affected friendships among Umno's leaders and members.

"I was very close to (Tan Sri) Tengku Razaleigh (Hamzah) and I respect him till this day. He was offended that I chose to side with Dr Mahathir, but I had to because I held on to the *wala'* principle and remained loyal to a party president."

He said when Umno was banned on Feb 4, 1988, it was party members who stood by Dr Mahathir through tough times.

Driving home the principle of *wala'*, or loyalty to the leadership, which had steered the party through challenges, Najib said party leaders and members practised this, adding that he did the same when he took over the party's helm.

"The *wala'* and devotion that I, Najib Razak, gave (during my time)

as deputy president, together with the Wanita, Youth and Puteri Umno chiefs and the majority of Umno members was not only to Pak Lah's (former Umno president Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) role as a figure, but to the institutions of the Umno president and prime minister of Malaysia."

He said this principle of loyalty was Umno's foundation and was passed down from the founding fathers.

"For sure, it is mandatory for this principle of *wala'* and devotion to be accepted by those at the helm and whoever that takes over as president and prime minister.

"*Wala'* and devotion in Malay culture and (Islam) is about upholding a team spirit for a common goal that is in line with the leader."

Umno vice-presidents Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk

Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said party members must move on and forget about former leaders who had shunned the party.

"There is no need for us to turn these former leaders into heroes, more so those who have left the Umno stage," Zahid said.

On the mood of this year's Umno general assembly, Hishammuddin said he sensed that delegates and members no longer brought with them the nostalgia attached to Dr Mahathir and other former leaders, such as Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal and Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir.

"Last year, we faced an unprecedented situation that was filled with much uncertainty, and the delegates also felt the uncertainty.

"This year, everyone has come together as a big Umno family looking forward to work as one for the good of the party."