

Newspaper	THE SUN
Date	29 DECEMBER 2016

# 'Mahathir's opinion not relevant'

The Sun - 29/12/2016

> Ex-premier's comments that BR1M is akin to bribery merely his personal view, says minister

**TUARAN, SABAH:** Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's opinion is no longer relevant because it is more of his personal perspective, said United Pasokmomogun Kadazandusun Murut Organisation (Upko) acting president Datuk Madius Tangau at the Upko Christmas open house in Tamparuli yesterday.

Madius, who is also Science, Technology and Innovation minister, was commenting on Mahathir's allegation that the iMalaysia People's Aid (BRiM) was a form of bribery and should be deemed illegal.

Since BRiM was introduced in 2012, it had been proven to help low income group, said Madius.

"Before this, the aid was given in the form of subsidies. Now, it has a target group, which is the B40 group. How can it be called bribery?"

About 5,000 people attended the open house, including Sulaman assemblyman Datuk Hajiji Noor and Kiulu assemblyman Datuk Joniston Bangkuai.

Meanwhile, in KUALA LUMPUR, Special Committee on Corruption former chairman Tan Sri Abu Zahar Ujang said BRiM shows the government adheres to the principle of responsibility in helping the people.

He said the assistance was distributed fairly to those eligible, including those who do not support the government.

"If BRiM was a form of corruption, it would be given only to those who support

the government. However, the government does not practise favouritism and gives it out regardless of religion, ethnicity and political affiliation," he said when contacted.

Abu Zahar said Mahathir should be clear on the definition of corruption, which involves an act that would damage one's morale and something given to gain something in return.

"This is in contrast with BRiM. Although the amount given was limited and did not solve the overall problem of household expenses, it could reduce the people's burden.

"We respect him but his views should be appropriate, do not come up with statements that will eventually trouble the people," he said.

Abu Zahar said BRiM was not a "tool" to win votes because it was given every year and not just during elections. - Bernama