

# Najib questions support, numbers

## Former PM clarifies timing of trial judges selection and Umno withdrawal

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**PETALING JAYA:** Datuk Seri Najib Razak (*pic*) has questioned the number of MPs who claimed to be backing Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Referring to the press conference held by a group of Barisan Nasional MPs yesterday, the former prime minister said 21 MPs were present during the event.

"It is claimed that they have the support of 31 Barisan MPs because ten did not attend.

"But that day, didn't they say that there were 40 Barisan MPs who supported Perikatan Nasional to make up a majority of 115?" he wrote on Facebook.

"So, does the eighth Prime Minister still have majority support if 40 falls to 21 or 31?" he added.

Meanwhile, the Pekan MP also said he never asked Muhyiddin to change the judges in his SRC International Sdn Bhd court case.

He said since Perikatan started governing, he had only met Muhyiddin once in December to talk about the Employees' Provident



Fund withdrawal issue.

"Would I ask for the judge to be changed after the trial is over and after the decision has been made?" he said in a Facebook post on Thursday.

The High Court had found Najib guilty on July 28, 2020, of all seven charges of abuse of power, criminal breach of trust and money laundering in relation to RM42mil belonging to SRC International.

Najib, who is appealing the conviction, had been sentenced by High Court judge Mohd Nazlan Mohd Ghazali to 12 years of jail and ordered to pay a RM210mil fine.

In August 2018, Mohd Nazlan had replaced Mohd Sofian Abd Razak who was originally assigned as the High Court judge to hear the case.

Najib added that when he met Muhyiddin last year, the issue of his court case came up and he merely

asked if the Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia president was aware that the judge in his case was replaced after the trial had already started.

"I asked him, which other country when handling such a high profile case, decides to change the judge after the trial has already started and the new judge assigned had only been appointed for a year with no prior experience in criminal cases and was only moved from the civil court to replace the judge in my case.

"Usually, more experienced judges would be assigned to high profile cases and not an inexperienced one.

"To this, Muhyiddin claimed to not know of the matter," he said.

Najib also denied that he would have been able to talk to Muhyiddin about selecting the judges in his appeal in the SRC International case.

"The three Appeals Court judges were only chosen in April 2021, whereas I met Muhyiddin in December 2020.

"The Umno general assembly held in March 2021 had already decided to withdraw support for

Perikatan, ahead of the appeal judges' selection in April.

"So how could I ask for these judges to be replaced when they hadn't even been appointed yet and Umno had already decided to withdraw support ahead of time?" he asked.

Najib said this in response to Muhyiddin's claim recently that he was pressured by "certain parties" to intervene in several court cases in exchange for support for Perikatan.

Bersatu information chief Wan Saiful Wan Jan had also claimed on social media that Najib had asked Muhyiddin to change the judges presiding over the appeal.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi also denied Muhyiddin's claims, saying that it was "crude and inappropriate" to accuse the party leadership of not supporting Perikatan because they were not freed of court charges.

Ahmad Zahid, who is facing 47 charges himself, said that it was compulsory for the Umno leaders to defend the party so that it did not veer off course from the people's track.

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