

# Fear against 'Malay Proclamation Rally' unfounded, says Dr M

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** After the planned "Malay Proclamation Rally" could not be held, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, one of its prime movers, says the fear of those against the Malays gathering to hold a discussion on their plight and corruption is unfounded.

The former prime minister took issue with the four cancellations of venue bookings for the event originally scheduled for yesterday, saying that all the participants wanted to do was to get together to sign a "Malay Proclamation" stating the "dire situation of the Malays in the country".

Dr Mahathir, the adviser of the movement's secretariat, was speaking at a media conference held amid tight security at the Parti Bumiputera Perkasa Malaysia (Putra) headquarters here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the adviser of the Malay rights party, Putra, following his resignation from Pejuang recently, said he held Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim responsible for the series of cancellations.

"Nothing like this (constant venue cancellations) could be done unless the Prime Minister has directed it. I am sure he is behind this to silence critics of his government.

"The proclamation has nothing to do with other races. The government is afraid of shadows. I am a very nice man.

"I was the Pejuang chairman and I lost the elections (GE15) completely - 125 seats. What is there to be afraid of except shadows that you yourself see?" asked the 97-year-old.

"We only wanted to state our stand against corruption and we are offended that only the opposition is now being investigated for corruption when those in the government get off scot-free despite being named in international exposes such as the Panama Papers and Pandora Papers."

Asked why he was now championing Malay rights, Dr Mahathir said he had raised the standards of living among the Malays from a mere two Malay doctors to converting the Malay-based Institut Teknologi Mara into the nation's biggest university.

He said stopping the Malays from gathering to discuss issues plaguing them in their own land would be to the detriment of the future generations of the community.

Dr Mahathir also read out and signed the 12-point declaration that listed the many ways the Malays were allegedly being hit economically, socially and politically.

Also present were the Malay Proclamation secretariat chair Datuk Marzuki Yahya and Putra president Datuk Ibrahim Ali.

Organisers of the rally were forced to abort the event after the bookings for four different venues here were cancelled.

On Friday, Anwar issued a stern warning to parties against using race and religion to promote strife, ahead of the planned rally.