

Umno using communist issue as a diversion, says Mat Sabu
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2 — Mohamad Sabu has called Umno's accusations that the PAS deputy president is a communist sympathiser an attempt to distract the public from current issues such as electoral fraud and inflation.

He said in a press conference in Kota Baru that Umno was trying to cover up the weaknesses of the federal government by accusing him of revering communists.

"The issue of communism has been purposely raised by Umno's newspaper to divert the attention of the public from electoral reforms and inflation," he added in a statement released today.

Mohamad's (picture) statements echo that of his Pakatan Rakyat (PR) colleagues who earlier accused Umno of rewriting history to ensure that the senior partner in the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) takes sole credit for the independence struggle.

But the federal opposition has also admitted that Mohamad's comments had allowed Umno a reprieve after being on the backfoot for months following record levels of inflation and the July 9 Bersih rally which saw tens of thousands pouring into the capital demanding for free and fair elections.

Umno has gone on the offensive since its Utusan Malaysia reported last Saturday that Mohamad had allegedly described as heroes those who attacked the Bukit Kepong police station during the pre-independence communist insurgency.

The Malay daily had accused him of disparaging the country's armed forces and expressing support for communists but Mohamad, popularly known as Mat Sabu, has denied the report or mentioning communists and has threatened to sue the newspaper.

But Umno leaders such as vice-president Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and even former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad have continued to accuse the PAS man of trying to revise history and glorify communists.

However, Mohamad pointed out today that Mat Indera, one of the individuals he praised in his ceramah on August 21, had been recognised as a freedom fighter by Umno-controlled Berita Harian on August 13, 2010.

Denying that he "idolised communists," the maverick politician also said that "Umno leaders are panicking as the history of the independence struggle is coming to light especially to the younger generation."

"I have been detained under the Internal Security Act twice and was accused of being a religious extremist," he added.

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