

**Dr M says Umno weak and damaged**  
**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 20 — Umno has not made any effective improvements since Election 2008 general and is unable to garner support from Malays, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed has said ahead of the party's general assembly at the end of the month.

The party's longest-serving president was quoted by its newspaper Utusan Malaysia today saying Umno currently lacked good, credible leaders and that it was a pale shadow of its former glory.

"Umno became badly damaged when Tun Abdullah Badawi took over. Because he prioritised his family and there were so many corruption allegations. And everyone knew about his son-in-law's involvement," he said, referring to Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin.

"This damaged Umno has been inherited by Datuk Seri Najib Razak for him to fix. Umno needs time before it can become stronger.

"But he (Najib) is busy and does not have enough time," he added in an interview published in the Malay daily's Sunday edition Minggu Malaysia.

In one of his harshest's remarks against his party, Dr Mahathir said the issue of credible leaders affected Umno's divisional level as well as the central leadership.

He said that some Umno leaders were only interested in holding on to a particular post within the party, or wanted to contest in the next general election and did not care about strengthening the party.

"Each person is only looking after his own...what's important should not be the individual but the party. If this goes on Umno will lose, Umno will not rule and all of us will not gain anything."

The former prime minister remained sceptical about Umno's upcoming assembly, saying that he doubted party leaders would actually use it as a platform to resolve outstanding issues.

One of the other problems affecting Umno, he said was its inability to respond to issues and accusations brought by the opposition.

"We won narrowly in the 2008 GE, that makes Umno weak. When someone is weak is it easy for other people to attack.

"If we can respond it is fine but it becomes a problem when we cannot respond," he said, explaining that for example if there were allegations of cronyism within the government, there should be a detailed explanation to alleviate any doubts on the matter.

He said that with a damaged Umno, Malays were already losing power in the country.

"I had said 10 years ago we will be losing power but we are now losing power. For almost

anything we have to ask the Chinese to support or else we are finished.

“So in actuality we are the minority, anything we want to do, we will be asked, what will the Chinese get? If it is like this it will be difficult.”

Umno goes into what is likely to be its last general assembly before a general election expected early next year.

Prime Minister Najib is said to need a marked improvement from the last polls to retain his position and only a return of its customary two-thirds majority of Parliament can guarantee he remains in office.

Barisan Nasional ceded 82 federal seats and five state governments in the landmark March 2008 election.

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