

Mahathir: I am no Mubarak, let alone the Pharaoh
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Jul 18: Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said derogatory labels used by political enemies on him were unfounded.

"When I was the prime minister, I had been called by many labels. Mahazalim, Firaun [Pharaoh], dictator - are some of the titles invented by my political enemies.

"What have I done which could be compared to a dictator's traits and actions?" he asked in his latest blog posting.

Following his dramatic sacking and arrest of his former deputy Anwar Ibrahim in 1998, a string of anti-government websites had mushroomed, one of the most prominent being 'Mahazalim'. The name 'Mahafiraun' was also coined during this period.

But Mahathir suggested that his actions in office paled in comparison with those committed by the now-ailing Egyptian military leader Hosni Mubarak during his rule.

Mahathir recalled the days when Mubarak's arrival would be pre-empted with closure of whole roads and stationing of sharp-shooters at rooftops.

"Mubarak's enemies were not allowed in politics, arrested and incarcerated without being charged and made to vanish. In his 30 years as president, his post had never been challenged. 99% of votes were for Mubarak.

"There was no freedom of speech or a free media. There were no elections for legislators. Mubarak could choose anyone to the cabinet. Likewise, he could dispose anyone," wrote the former UMNO strongman, before giving brief overviews of well-known tyrants such as Germany's Hitler, Italy's Benito Mussolini, the Philippines' Ferdinand Marcos, Romania's Nicolae Ceauşescu, as well Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

Mahathir added that he was interested to know from visitors to his blog how he could be qualified for the label 'dictator'.

Last month, Mahathir listed several reasons why he did not deserve the fate of fallen dictators and accused Pakatan Rakyat of wanting to see him languish behind bars if the coalition comes to power.

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