

**I'm not responsible for what Megat Junid allegedly said or did, says Dr Mahathir**  
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**BY LEE SHI-IAN**

"I never gave the late Tan Sri Megat Junid any instruction on the issuance of identity cards to illegal immigrants," former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He told the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on illegal immigrants in Sabah that he was not responsible for everything that the former deputy Home Minister Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayob was alleged to have said or done.

He was replying to questions from RCI consulting officer Manoj Kurup, who asked the country's longest-serving premier about claims by previous RCI witnesses.

Manoj pointed out that one of the witnesses, former Sandakan district chief officer, Hassnar Ebrahim, had given evidence that Megat Junid had allegedly instructed the identity cards to be given to illegal immigrants in Sabah to help alter the state's demographics.

Hassnar had testified that Megat Junid had told him that the order for the project came from Dr Mahathir himself.

"Hassnar? I have never heard of him. I am also not aware that he had been arrested under the Internal Security Act," Dr Mahathir said, adding it could have been the decision of the National Security Council to detain Hassnar.

Manoj then asked Dr Mahathir about the various identity cards used by the illegal immigrants, including Kad Layang-Layang, Kad Burung-Burung and Kad Expo, to which he replied, the only identity card he knew was the IC, drawing laughter from the gallery.

The counsel then asked Dr Mahathir whether he knew of the book Projek IC Agenda Tersembunyi Mahathir.

"I glanced through the book recently when somebody gave me a copy. It is a good academic read.

"But I don't know how the author could reach the conclusion that it was my decision to implement Project IC. However, I realise when people use my name, the book sells very well," said Dr Mahathir, which brought another round of laughter from the gallery.

Manoj also asked Dr Mahathir what he thought about an amnesty programme for immigrants who had obtained identity cards through dubious means, which had been proposed by National Registration Department director-general Datuk Jariah Mohd Said yesterday.

"If these immigrants fulfill the criteria for an identity card, then it's up to the NRD officer concerned whether they want to accept or reject the application, but I don't know whether it is a good idea or not," Dr Mahathir said.

He did, however, add that it should be taken into consideration that these immigrants have been living in Malaysia for decades and could speak the local language well.

While it was true that they had made mistakes in the past, Dr Mahathir was of the opinion that it was not beyond Malaysians to be forgiving.

"At the end of the day, it is up to the government to make a decision. I am a pensioner now, there are provisions in the law to deal with cases like this," he said, as he leaned back in his chair and spoke in a firm and clear tone. – September 11, 2013.

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