

Petronas says Dr M still adviser, denies mistreatment

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 10 — Petronas has refuted claims it mistreated Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, describing the accusations by the Malay Economic Action Council (MTEM) as “malicious” and blatant fabrications.

The oil and gas giant also said the former prime minister is still Petronas’ adviser, a month after Dr Mahathir tendered his resignation to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

“Petronas categorically denies the claim that it took actions to vacate Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad’s office following the announcement of his intention to relinquish his position.

“Petronas unequivocally condemns the malicious statements of MTEM who blatantly fabricated this claim for their questionable purposes,” the state oil company said in an emailed response to The Malay Mail Online last night.

In an expletive-ridden rant at a news conference here yesterday, the Malay business lobby group castigated Petronas chief Tan Sri Shamsul Azhar Abas for his company’s alleged mistreatment of Dr Mahathir.

Representatives from MTEM also told reporters high-handed action against the former prime minister within 24 hours of his departure from the Petronas office here last month.

Contacted by *The Malay Mail Online*, Petronas said Dr Mahathir remained its adviser.

Malaysia’s sole Fortune 500 company also said Dr Mahathir still has his office at the iconic Petronas Twin Towers in the city centre, and added that the company holds nothing but the utmost respect and esteem towards the 88-year-old.

It signalled that it would not interfere in matters concerning its adviser, which it pointed out was at the discretion of the prime minister.

“Decision on matters relating to the appointment or resignation of Petronas’ Advisor is the prerogative of the Office of the Prime Minister of Malaysia and beyond the purview of Petronas,” it said.

Dr Mahathir announced his resignation as Petronas adviser in a letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak dated December 1, 2013.

State news agency Bernama reported Dr Mahathir saying it was time for him to leave the national oil corporation so he could concentrate on his health.

Dr Mahathir was discharged from the National Heart Institute on November 25 last year after being admitted on November 16 for a chest infection.

The day after, Najib asked Dr Mahathir to reconsider quitting.

Dr Mahathir then announced he was having second thoughts.

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