

**Dr Mahathir withdraws support for Najib government**  
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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today lashed out at Datuk Seri Najib Razak's administration, saying he was withdrawing his support for Najib as his criticism had fallen on deaf ears.

"I have tried to give my views to him directly, which are also the views of many people who have met me," wrote Dr Mahathir today on his popular blog, chedet.cc.

"I have no choice but to withdraw my support. This has not been effective so I have to criticise," he said, adding that Najib was no better than his predecessor, Tun Abdullah Badawi.

Dr Mahathir said he had hoped Najib learnt lessons from his poor performance in the last general election but it appeared that he had not.

"Many policies, approaches and actions taken by the government under Najib have destroyed interracial ties, the economy and the country's finances," he added.

The country's longest serving prime minister said if no one else wished to speak out against the administration, he would take it upon himself to criticise Najib, even if it meant opening himself up to abuse.

He added that he had similarly reproached Abdullah as well as Malaysia's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman.

"It is not because I do not love my leaders. But I love my people and country more," he wrote in his blog.

Dr Mahathir said Najib's slide began when the latter listened to his "enemies' demands" and abolished the Internal Security Act in 2011 and the Restrictive Residents Act, which allowed the government to detain anyone including suspected

criminals without trial.

"These actions did not reduce opposition from the other side. Instead, crime increased because many gang leaders were released," said the former prime minister, an active proponent of the security laws that allowed detention without trial.

He added that Najib's "humble" attitude towards neighbouring countries had left Malaysia's domestic affairs subject to their views.

"But the views of the race and the party, which had all this while supported and saved the government, are not given fair treatment," he said obliquely referring to Umno.

Dr Mahathir also took Najib to task for using the government's money to gain support from the people each time there was an election.

"The people's spirit to work fades away when they are rewarded without making any effort. This will not help in developing the country," he wrote.

Dr Mahathir was apparently referring to the populist 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) cash vouchers which the government hands out twice a year to the people.

But Najib has defended BR1M from Dr Mahathir's constant criticisms, saying that it was part of the government's efforts to move away from blanket subsidies and instead provide targeted aid to the people.

Dr Mahathir also added that Najib was ruining the economy by prioritising imported goods at the expense of the local industry.

"Extra holidays are given to the point that there are workers who take holidays for over a week.

"The minimum wage is increased without taking into account rising costs, which could reduce local business's competitiveness," he added in the post.

Dr Mahathir said all of these policies had continued because none of the government's supporters dared to criticise their leaders.

"I notice that many Malays do not criticise their leaders. Even though their leaders are obviously in the wrong, no one dares to openly reproach them," he said.

But he noted that his own letter to Tunku Abdul Rahman criticising his unpopular policies eventually led to the latter's resignation.

Dr Mahathir said Abdullah followed the same route when he stepped down in 2009.

"I, too, stepped down. Part of the reason is because I heard whispers questioning 'when will this old man go'. I believe if I had not resigned, those whispers would have turned into shouts," he wrote.

"My choice to replace Tun Abdullah was Datuk Seri Najib. But after a while, I can see that Datuk Seri Najib's policies and actions are no more effective than Tun Abdullah's."

Dr Mahathir began openly attacking Abdullah and his administration in 2006 over his policies, including cancelling the "crooked" bridge to link Singapore and Johor.

He turned to his blog to criticise Abdullah for his "half-past-six government", and even took shots at the latter's tendency to nap in public.

Abdullah, who took over the government from Mahathir in 2003, also earned his predecessor's disapproval when he discontinued the double-tracking rail

megaproject.

The public feud between the two took a turn for the worse when Dr Mahathir quit Umno in 2008, after Abdullah led Barisan Nasional (BN) to the historic loss of its two-thirds majority in Parliament during the 12th general election.

Dr Mahathir had told his supporters that he would only return to Umno once there was a change in leadership.

After resisting growing pressure to resign, Abdullah was forced to relinquish his Umno presidency and prime minister post to Najib in 2008.

Last year, Abdullah responded to Dr Mahathir's criticism in his book "Awakening" and blamed the former prime minister for contributing to the loss of BN support in the 2008 election.

"Mahathir is set in his ways. And he believes that his way is the only way. When I tried to do things differently, he believed that I was doing things wrongly. But that is Mahathir," wrote Abdullah. – August 18, 2014.

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