

**DAP claim Umno 'manufacturing cases' against opposition, academic
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The recent slew of sedition and criminal cases against opposition leaders, an academic as well as Penang's Voluntary Patrol Unit are manufactured to divert attention from Umno's internal strife, said an opposition lawmaker, who noted that the current atmosphere of increased political strife was similar during the 1987 Operasi Lalang.

DAP Kluang MP Liew Chin Tong (pic) said it has been Umno's modus operandi to galvanise its hardcore base by focusing on the 3R agenda of race, religion and royalty in an attempt to drive a wedge between the Malays and non-Malays.

This was exemplified with the Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's speech at the Segambut Umno division meeting two days ago where he allegedly said non-Muslims were becoming "increasingly arrogant" and that Malays are now paying the price for being kind to them and as a result, the non-Malays are insulting the bumiputera, royalty and Islam.

This comes as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad withdrew his support for Datuk Seri Najib Razak due to the prime minister's policies and soft approach which Malaysia's longest serving prime minister claimed did not benefit the country. Liew said Dr Mahathir's calibrated attack inflicted huge damage on Najib in the eyes of his party members and the Umno president had been facing challenges from extremists.

"Najib and Zahid are dancing to the tune of Dr Mahathir and the hawks. Indeed, Zahid is now notoriously a hawk himself.

"Zahid is paving the ground for an Ops Lalang-like attack on the opposition to divert attention from internal Umno strife," he said in a statement today.

Under Ops Lalang, when Dr Mahathir was both prime minister and home minister, more than 100 political leaders and social activists were arrested and detained under the draconian but now repealed Internal Security Act (ISA), ostensibly carried out to prevent racial riots in Kuala Lumpur.

Liew pointed out in April 1987, Umno encountered its most divisive party polls which saw Dr Mahathir clinging on to his Umno presidency by a mere 43 votes against Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Six months later on October 27, 106 senior politicians and activists were detained under the ISA.

"The fear unleashed through ISA or prosecutions under the Sedition Act is meant to disarm dissent both within UMNO and outside the ruling coalition," he said.

As such, the DAP central working committee member said the latest arrests and persecution spree showed Umno feared democracy and freedom of speech, which are threatening the autocrats.

"The fault-line in Malaysian politics is not that of between the Malays and the non-Malays, but between old politics of fear, greed and corruption and the new politics of reforms. There are non-Malays who are corrupt and there are many Malays who are supportive of new politics," he said.

He said DAP, which has often been demonised by Umno and its allies in the ruling Barisan Nasional pact, is a party for all and not for any particular race.

"DAP represents all Malaysians and if more Malays and Bumiputras become part of DAP, Umno will not have its whipping boy anymore.

"If Umno is not able to paint DAP as a non-Malay champion, Umno would have no more reason to exist as its sole legitimacy now lies in its claim to 'defend' the Malays against the threat of the DAP," he said, adding that the future of Malaysia will be determined by Malaysians who can see beyond ethnic boundaries.

In the last few days, opposition leaders have been part of Putrajaya's sedition dragnet which critics had pointed out is an attempt by Putrajaya to silence its political foes.

The latest was against an academician, a Universiti Malaya law lecturer Dr Azmi Sharom who was charged with sedition this morning over comments he had made on the Perak constitutional crisis in 2009. – September 2, 2014.

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