

Dr M: They can call me what they want, I wouldn't have sued Malaysiakini
The Malay Mail Online

June 04, 2014

BY ZURAIRI AR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 4 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he would not have taken legal action against *Malaysiakini* even as he backed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's right to sue the news portal for alleged defamation.

Wading into the row perceived as an attempt to muzzle the media over government reports, the former prime minister conceded Najib had the right to use the existing laws to defend his reputation.

"Ya, it is right," Dr Mahathir replied when asked by reporters if the sixth prime minister was right in suing for defamation.

Despite that, the 88-year-old insisted he would not have taken the same action as Najib.

"I don't, I won't sue. They call me anything also, they can," he said.

"This is politics. In politics, you get cursed. That's alright," added Dr Mahathir.

The nation's longest serving former prime minister pointed out that he had been called many names in the past, including "jihadist" and "infidel".

He also joked that he rarely goes to court because he cannot afford it, referring to his five-year RM100 million legal battle with political nemesis Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He told reporters that even after the case was thrown out of court and Anwar had to pay damages, most of the money had gone to the lawyers.

"After he lost, I only got RM70,000. It was not even enough to pay the lawyers. Supposedly, if he sued me for RM100 million, then he should've paid me that much money when he lost. That would've been fair," Dr Mahathir said jokingly.

He was speaking at a lecture in the International Islamic University Malaysia here, during which he mentioned the futility of restricting online media in protecting the faith of Muslims.

Umno, the country's largest political party, and its president Najib have filed a civil suit against news portal *Malaysiakini* yesterday over a series of readers' posts published on their website related to the recent Terengganu menteri besar saga.

The suit centres on two articles published by *Malaysiakini* during the brief leadership crisis in Terengganu last May, titled "A case of the PM reaping what he sows" and "How much will Najib spend to keep Terengganu?"

Sources: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/dr-m-they-can-call-me-what-they-want-i-wouldnt-have-sued-malaysiakini>