

**Umno urged to organise talks by Dr M**  
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**It's only right that Mahathir's critics hear his side of the story, says Shahbudin Husin.**

PETALING JAYA: If Umno members truly cared about their party's future, they would be scrambling to accept Dr Mahathir Mohamad's offer to explain why he is opposed to Prime Minister Najib's leadership, Shahbudin Husin says in a blog article he posted last night.

"Here is a golden opportunity to hear Mahathir's side of the story, and Umno branches and divisions should not let go of it," Shahbudin writes.

He notes that Umno's Wanita, Youth and Puteri wings as well as a large number of division heads have declared their support for Najib, but after hearing only the Prime Minister's side of the story.

"It's only right that they should now hear Mahathir out," he says.

Shahbudin refers to a blog article Mahathir posted yesterday, in which the former prime minister says Umno members cannot make an informed judgement of his intention until they have given him the opportunity to speak to them. "Decide whether I'm destroying the party or intending to save it after listening to both sides," Mahathir says.

Shahbudin says a meeting with Mahathir will give his critics the opportunity to question him and debate with him.

"This is especially applicable to those division heads who have been loudly condemning Mahathir through the traditional as well as new media," he says.

"There's no reason for them to fear a direct confrontation with Mahathir. After all, he no longer has the power he used to wield."

Referring to rumours that some Umno branch chiefs have proposed disciplinary action against Mahathir, Shahbudin says they should instead gather the courage to invite Mahathir to address the members of those branches.

He says if enough branches and divisions could show such courage, they might even reach a consensus to the effect that Mahathir is indeed weakening the party with his attacks on Najib, and this might even result in Mahathir backing down.

"However, if Mahathir manages to convince them that he is doing the right thing for Umno, it will be incumbent upon them to support him because the survival of the party itself is more important than the survival of its leader."

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