

Anifah Aman takes Dr M to task for ‘undermining his own country’

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By Hamzah Nazari

KUALA LUMPUR, Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is the subject of an open Letter to the Editor of the New York Times from Malaysia’s Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman, who is currently in New York chairing the United Nations Security Council.

In the letter, authenticated by Anifah himself to The Rakyat Post, he wrote that it was regrettable to see Dr Mahathir “seeking to undermine his own country in the international media as part of a personal political vendetta”.

“It is irresponsible of any citizen, let alone a former Prime Minister, to spread lies and distortions about state owned companies — saying for example that RM42 billion is missing from 1MDB (1Malaysia Development Berhad) to create public anxiety, when in fact these are audited debts backed by RM51 billion assets.

“These reckless claims have affected market sentiment towards Malaysia,” wrote Anifah.

He continued that it was telling that Dr Mahathir continued to mount his attacks rather than wait for the findings of the inquiries currently being undertaken by Malaysia’s central bank, Auditor-General and Parliament’s bipartisan Public Accounts Committee.

“This shows that Tun Mahathir is not interested in answers from the appropriate lawful authorities.

“Rather, he is just using 1MDB as an excuse to topple the serving Prime Minister, (Datuk Seri) Najib Tun Razak.”

Anifah attributed Dr Mahathir’s actions to the latter’s personal demands not being met, adding that Dr Mahathir himself had acknowledged this.

“Prime Minister Najib, as Malaysia’s democratically elected leader, will do what he thinks is right for the nation, and will not allow rule by proxy.

“Tun Mahathir told the New York Times that Umno ‘lacks vision and talented people’, that it ‘has become a repository of patronage-seeking politicians’, and that members ‘try to keep out people who are more intelligent than themselves’.

“But it is Tun Mahathir who led the party for 22 years.

“It was he that, during his time, worked to cultivate ‘yes men’ and entrench his position — even introducing a quota system for the Umno presidency to prevent challengers — rather than bringing in talent and strengthening the party.

“It is Prime Minister Najib who democratised the party constitution to make it far easier to challenge him for his job.”

Anifah, in his own words, said that it was “simply outrageous” and “entirely false” for Dr Mahathir to accuse Najib of acts “verging on criminal”.

“It is a measure of the reforms put in place under Prime Minister Najib’s administration that Tun Mahathir has the freedom to be so vocally critical of the party and government he once led.

“But Tun Mahathir is abusing that freedom, and his privileged standing as a former Prime Minister, to indulge in reckless and baseless personal smears against Prime Minister Najib and his family.

“Most Malaysians would rather see Tun Mahathir retire gracefully than continue to damage the standing of his own country for personal political gain,” concluded the open letter.

Dr Mahathir and Najib are embroiled in a public spat with the former premier launching harsh criticisms towards the current premier in both local and foreign media, especially over the past few months.

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