

Dr M says he only wants to help Sirul
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Despite the general perception that he was exploiting convicted murderer Sirul Azhar Umar's case for political gain, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he only wanted to help his former bodyguard.

In a recent interview with bloggers, the former prime minister defended himself from accusations that he was politicising the Altantuya Shaariibuu murder case, when he said the authorities must find out who had ordered Sirul to kill the woman.

"I did not talk about this for a long time but those two (former police corporal Sirul and former chief inspector Azilah Hadri) are facing the death penalty. You have to help them and save them.

"Sirul was once my bodyguard and now he is facing the noose... when I talk of this, they say I am with the opposition. But this is a man's life.

"Supposing you are sentenced to be hanged for something you didn't do and nobody helps you. 'Mampiah pi la' (to hell with it)... you want me to be like that?" he said in the interview.

The interview, conducted after Najib went on TV3 last Thursday to answer accusations by Dr Mahathir against his administration over various issues, including Altantuya's murder in 2006, had been uploaded on the blog Din Turtle as several video clips.

Najib said he never knew or met the murdered woman. He said police had conducted investigations and also verified that he was not involved in the case.

Asked what he thought of the perception he was giving the people by talking about Sirul at this time, Dr Mahathir said it was up to others to decide what to make of it.

He said if Sirul would not say who had instructed him to commit the act, he should not be forced and if it was true he had killed a person, then he deserved the noose.

"But he was a policeman and policemen don't kill people unless those people had attacked them first or they were instructed to kill.

"Otherwise, we would all be fearful that the police could just shoot us," he said.

Dr Mahathir said all those facing the death sentence were entitled to have their appeals for pardon heard by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong or Sultan, and probably also the prime minister.

"When I was PM, it was my duty to advise the ruler on such appeals. In (notorious gangster in the 1960s and 1970s) Botak Chin's appeal, I said hang him but there had

been others who were pardoned," he said, adding that it was not easy to decide whether to kill a person.

Dr Mahathir also spoke of his meeting with Sirul's mother, Piah Samat, who was accompanied by PAS information chief Datuk Mahfuz Omar at his office in Putrajaya last Wednesday.

"His mother came but she did not speak. It was not like she could tell (me) anything anyway.

"She was 'kaku' (rigid). I think they (Sirul's family) are living in fear. Of what, I don't know.

"I asked Mahfuz what she had told him and even he said she had said nothing at all."

Sirul is currently being held at an Australian immigration detention centre. He left Malaysia last year before the Federal Court upheld his conviction for killing Altantuya in 2006.

He is reportedly trying to use legal means to ensure he continues to remain in Australia and escape the death penalty. – April 12, 2015.

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