

We can't go on answering Dr M, says Hishammuddin
The Malaysian Insider
April 13, 2015
By Melati A. Jalil

Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein today became the first top Umno leader to defend party chief Datuk Seri Najib Razak against attacks by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, saying the party cannot afford to waste time repulsing allegations against the party leadership which keep changing every day.

The Umno vice-president said Najib had answered some of the issues raised earlier, but that Dr Mahathir kept raising other issues.

"When is it going to stop? When are we going to stop having to answer all these allegations that have been raised day in day out by him?"

"What is the end game, what is the purpose? If we continue like that who is going to run the country?" he asked today, following Dr Mahathir's latest tirade against the party.

Over the weekend, Dr Mahathir in a video clip uploaded on the blog Din Turtle lambasted his critics, saying that Umno now "was about money".

Under the current leadership, Umno was filled with rent-seeking leaders who were loyal only to money, Dr Mahathir said in the video.

The former prime minister's tirade followed criticism by Umno members who said he was causing a rift in the party with his constant attacks against Najib.

"Umno now is about money. The leaders of Umno are loyal because they get contracts.

"The ones who receive posts receive money," Dr Mahathir said in response to the claim that his criticism was dividing the party.

When asked what if Dr Mahathir did not stop his criticism, Hishammuddin said, "What can one man decide, because the ones that decide are Umno members, not him".

"One man asks him to stop, it is not going to make any difference."

He said even during Dr Mahathir's reign, the former prime minister had reminded party members that criticism should not affect the leadership.

"When Dr Mahathir led, he reminded us if (we) want to criticise, don't let it affect the leadership," Hishammuddin said, adding that if deputy prime minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's suggestion for them to discuss like a family could succeed, then the plan should proceed.

He said Umno had gone through the same situation previously, and he believed it could overcome the situation today.

"Nothing new, we have been through it before... at the time when my father was criticising Dr Mahathir, no different, Umno was banned, Dr Mahathir left Umno and came back, Tengku Razaleigh formed his own party, and came back to us," he said without elaborating further.

"So what is happening today, we can overcome it, with the condition that we look after party interest, and country interest and our unity, as multiracial society.

"If we were capable of overcoming it those days, when facing the same problems, threats and critics, why can't we do it (now)." – April 13, 2015.

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