

**Remove Najib to save Umno, says Dr M**  
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**By Kc Nazari**

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad did not mince his words today when he explicitly told Umno to remove Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in order to save the party from greater losses in the next general election.

The former prime minister said this was one of two "choices" Umno had in the face of mounting criticism against Najib.

"We are faced with this choice: either you remove a prime minister who has failed and who will lead Umno to lose the next election, or you take your chance that if he goes off, we may be able to revive Umno," Dr Mahathir told a press conference after speaking at an international forum on criminalising war in Kuala Lumpur today.

He said this when asked by the press whether his open disagreement with Najib over the latter's leadership and policies would result in a split in Umno.

Dr Mahathir said Najib, who is president of Umno, was incompetent to be prime minister because he had failed to explain the whereabouts of 1Malaysia Development Bhd's (1MDB) funds.

He said his unhappiness with Najib was not over the crooked bridge project – Dr Mahathir's idea while he was prime minister to replace Malaysia's half of the Causeway with Singapore – but over his inability to account for money lost.

"I wrote about 1MDB but people say, oh, he is unhappy not with 1MDB but with (the) crooked bridge.

"I don't advocate the removal of a PM because he is too afraid of Singapore to build a crooked bridge.

"I am sympathetic towards him because he is very weak so he cannot build the bridge brick by brick.

"So for that I excuse him, but when you lose money and cannot explain where the money is, I think you are not competent to become PM."

The prime minister of 22 years has become Najib's fiercest critic, taking him to task over the government-owned 1MDB, his policy of giving cash handouts under Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M), and more recently over the murder of Mongolian interpreter Altantuya Shaariibuu, whom Najib has denied ever knowing.

Dr Mahathir previously called for Najib's resignation, but had never before this told Umno to take action so openly.

Before this, the country's longest-serving prime minister had focused his criticism of Najib over his performance and capabilities as prime minister.

But he recently compared Najib with his (Dr Mahathir's) predecessor, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, by saying that even Abdullah who had a sleep disorder, had performed better in the 2008 general election than Najib did in 2013.

His raising of Altantuya's murder recently was also seen as an attempt to turn up the pressure, by meeting with the mother of one of the convicted murders, former commander Sirul Azhar Umar, who has escaped death row by fleeing to Australia.

Dr Mahathir said that Sirul's claim of being instructed to kill Altantuya ought to be further investigated.

Today, Dr Mahathir was also asked if he would work with his political nemesis, opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to lead Malaysia, as suggested by former minister Datuk Zaid Ibrahim.

"I don't know," he said when asked by reporters of Zaid's proposal, written on his blog yesterday.

Zaid had suggested that Dr Mahathir, veteran Kelantan Umno lawmaker Tan Sri Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Anwar join forces to remove Najib and run the country. – April 18, 2015.

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