

**Postponing Umno polls will only invite more criticism, Pak Kassim tells Najib**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**Jun 28, 2015**

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's decision to delay the Umno elections by 18 months will only invite more criticism of his administration, a scholar said today.

Dr Kassim Ahmad, who is also an Umno member, said in his blog the decision gave an impression that Najib and the Umno Supreme Council were afraid of facing the grassroots and answering questions on current affairs in the country.

Najib is currently under pressure to relinquish his post following calls from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former prime minister had said Barisan Nasional would lose the next elections if Najib continued leading the coalition.

"Postponing the polls will only create more criticism for Najib's leadership, as voiced by Dr Mahathir," Kassim, also known as Pak Kassim, said in his blog.

He said the decision gave an impression that Najib and Umno had something to hide.

"I advise them to face the delegates, give a briefing about the government and the party, accept their criticism," he said.

Kassim said party elections should not disrupt preparations for general elections or duty to the people, but instead enhanced it as party leaders would have more opportunities to explain current situation to the people.

"Will a general assembly disrupt services to the people? Will it affect preparations for the elections? I think the opposite will happen. It will actually improve everything."

Najib is currently trying to deal with the controversy surrounding his brainchild 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), which had accumulated RM42 billion of debt in just six years since its inception.

He has so far refused to give in to the calls for his resignation.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor yesterday denied that the decision to postpone the party elections was related to the controversy surrounding 1MDB.

He said the decision was made after taking into consideration views from the grassroots, after they had highlighted several issues which needed to be resolved. – June 28, 2015.

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