

Leave but do 3 things first, ex-minister tells Najib
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The only way for Datuk Seri Najib Razak to get out of the "hole" he is currently in is to step down as prime minister, former Umno minister Datuk Zaid Ibrahim said.

Repeating calls for the embattled prime minister to resign following controversies plaguing his administration, Zaid said Najib should redeem himself by leaving a legacy of tackling corruption.

Writing in his blog post last night, he said Najib remaining in office would only exacerbate the country's problems and the people's suffering.

He said there was nothing the prime minister could do now that would make people trust in him again and as such, he would not be able to govern effectively.

"You must step down as prime minister because there is no way you can get out of this hole," he said.

Zaid suggested that Najib announced his resignation at year-end and, in the meantime, did three things to atone his sins and mitigate errors committed under his watch.

"You must salvage something of your life as prime minister despite all that has happened."

Zaid said since the greatest scourge the country faced was corruption, Najib needed to address the problem as "his lasting gift to the country".

To achieve this, Zaid suggested that first, Najib should revisit the Official Secrets Act to ensure that it only accorded protection to military secrets and the security of the nation.

"The act should not protect and hide government contracts and financial dealings.

"There must also be openness in all government affairs so that your successor, ministers and elite civil servants will be more careful with public funds."

Second, Zaid urged Najib to ensure that ministers and the chairmen of off-budget agencies and their families declare their assets for public scrutiny.

"You know I tried to do this without success but perhaps after what has happened, Barisan Nasional ministers will now have a change of heart. Also, introduce a law under which the prime minister is prohibited from assuming other portfolios, especially finance."

Finally, he suggested that political funding be legislated so that taxpayers contributed

sufficient amount to political parties to cover election expenses.

"We need at least to mitigate this need for money by providing some contributions to them. Other democracies have done this and so should we."

Zaid added that if Najib chose to ignore his advice and stay on as prime minister for the next decade, he would be remembered for the case of murdered Mongolian national Altantuya Shaariibuu, government-owned debt ridden fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and the AmPrivate banking account.

"However, if you leave a legacy of tackling corruption, even if you just put these initial measures in place, you will be remembered differently.

"In six months, you could transform the country, which no one in your team today is willing to do.

"You will be remembered as a man who redeemed himself. The choice is yours," Zaid said. – July 7, 2015.

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