

DR MAHATHIR, MUHYIDDIN SOUGHT G25 SUPPORT TO REPLACE NAJIB

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By Super Admin

(The Star) – Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin met the group of eminent Malays (G25) to seek their support in changing the country's leadership, a member of the group revealed.

Tawfik Ismail (*pix*), who is the son of Malaysia's second deputy prime minister Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, said G25 met the two leaders separately where the topic of replacing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak was raised.

He said the group, however, refused to get involved as they wished to remain non-partisan and were not convinced that Najib's replacement would fare any better.

"We first met Dr Mahathir earlier this year to discuss Islam and the constitution when he broached the subject of a change in leadership.

"I countered by saying: what makes him think replacing Najib would be any better? At that time, Muhyiddin was still deputy prime minister," he told *The Star Online* Sunday.

Tawfik said a confrontation transpired between them at the meeting when Dr Mahathir criticised Najib over his involvement in the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) controversy, prompting him to point out the former prime minister's own failings.

He revealed that a meeting then took place with Muhyiddin in October, three months after he was dropped from the Cabinet.

"It was our first meeting with Muhyiddin, and there were 12 of us (G25 members) there. He asked us how he could assist a 'movement' that G25 could be involved in.

"We told him we did not think that he and Dr Mahathir were the right people to fight Najib because they carried baggage with them.

"In terms of credibility, how can they portray themselves to be any better?" said Tawfik.

He said the group met Dr Mahathir for a second time on the afternoon of Oct 12, just after the former premier held a press conference with other veteran Barisan Nasional leaders, including Muhyiddin, to slam the use of the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 on political critics.

"Four of us went for the meeting where Dr Mahathir asked if the G25 was prepared to make a joint-statement with a Chinese group to talk about concerns regarding business confidence and economic uncertainty.

“We said we didn’t want to make it a race thing – where a Malay and Chinese group get together. What about other racial groups?” he asked.

Tawfik said that G25 instead proposed bringing in East Malaysia and approaching the issue as a national force, as well as exploring the national consultative council idea mooted by Najib’s brother, Datuk Seri Nazir Razak.

“We didn’t give him (Dr Mahathir) what he wanted because we wanted to play the national card,” he said.

The former Umno lawmaker said G25 still regarded Najib as the best person to lead the country as he was a moderate by nature.

“The Prime Minister is under siege now because of strong right-wing elements within Umno, and they are the ones stifling his moderate stance.

“But being the son of Tun Abdul Razak and a Western-educated politician, it is quite unlikely he is right-wing himself. We have to seek out the moderate quality inside him and strengthen it for the betterment of the nation,” Tawfik added.

Muhyiddin and Dr Mahathir’s camp could not be immediately reached for a response.

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