

Unlike Najib, I allowed open challenges, says Dr Mahathir
The Malaysian Insider
Oct 7, 2015

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he never stopped his opponents from challenging him openly while he was Umno president, in another blog post aimed at Datuk Seri Najib Razak whom he accused of being undemocratic.

Dr Mahathir said he allowed open campaigning by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and Tan Sri Musa Hitam, who in the late 1980s had tried to run for the Umno president's and deputy president's post in order to oust him.

"They intended to topple me. But I never stopped them from campaigning among Umno members, and Umno members were not prevented from attending their campaigns," the retired statesman wrote in his blog today.

"Umno divisions could invite them to officiate division meetings and they could campaign during the opening of these meetings and at other times."

Dr Mahathir, who was prime minister for 22 years and survived attempts to challenge his leadership of Umno, the ruling Malay party, said that some divisions had even nominated Tengku Razaleigh and Musa for the top two party posts.

But he did not consider them "enemies whom I had to act against", he added.

"There was no restriction on their nominations because that is the way democracy is," he said.

But Najib was now behaving as if his position as Umno president was under threat, as seen in the actions against party members and leaders who have been critical of the prime minister and his brainchild 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), added Dr Mahathir.

"The Umno president has not even been officially challenged, and I am not allowed to meet with leaders and Umno members," he wrote, adding that he had visited Tawau, Sabah recently, on the invitation of someone from a rival political party.

"Even though the invitation came from an enemy of Umno, I accepted it because I wanted to see the changes in Tawau. If I had waited for Umno to invite me, I would never get to visit Tawau.

"Even though I am still an Umno member and was once president of the party, I am now considered by the leadership as an enemy of the party I led for 22 years," Dr Mahathir said.

The retired statesman has become Najib's arch critic over the latter's policies and alleged financial scandal in 1MDB.

He has repeatedly called for Najib's resignation, even asking voters in the prime

minister's constituency of Pekan not to vote for him in the next election. – October 7, 2015.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/unlike-najib-i-allowed-open-challengers-says-dr-mahathir>