

**Anwar defends Dr Mahathir, says nothing wrong in criticising Najib over 1MDB**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**Nov 7, 2015**

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad did nothing wrong in asking questions and criticising the prime minister over debt-ridden 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB), the retired statesman's former political foe, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said in a message from jail today.

"I am gravely concerned by the news that former prime minister of Malaysia Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is the subject of a police investigation for criminal defamation and was questioned by the police on November 6," Anwar, who is serving a sentence for a second sodomy conviction, said in a statement issued through his lawyers.

"He committed no crime when he asked questions and voiced criticism against the prime minister on the 1MDB crisis."

Anwar, who was sacked as deputy prime minister by Dr Mahathir in 1998, said he was concerned over police investigations against his former boss who was questioned by police yesterday for criminal defamation over his statements about 1MDB and Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"If this is how Tun Dr Mahathir is treated, the democratic right of ordinary Malaysians to question and criticise the government is in serious jeopardy," Anwar said.

"Our constitution and the democratic rights therein guaranteed to our people must not be disregarded or interfered with by government or enforcement agencies. I have watched with increasing concern the worsening strain of authoritarianism by those in power."

Instead of investigating Dr Mahathir, Anwar said Najib and the government should answer the questions he had raised – the same ones being asked by ordinary Malaysians.

"This heavy-handed response will only worsen the crisis of confidence in the PM, the government and institutions involved in trying to silence critics.

"I call for an end to this harassment against Dr Mahathir and all others, who have merely done their duty by our country by voicing out against the errors and wrongdoings of the government and its leaders."

Police questioned Dr Mahathir yesterday for about 45 minutes at his Kuala Lumpur office at the Al-Bukhary Foundation. The veteran Umno leader said he did not answer the questions.

Dr Mahathir had attended the Bersih 4 rally in August calling for democratic reforms and Najib's resignation over alleged financial scandals. At the rally, he talked about

Najib and his alleged taking of funds.

The authorities opened several investigation papers after police reports were lodged against Dr Mahathir.

These investigations were related to Section 500 of the Penal Code for defamation.

Dr Mahathir, 90, has been a staunch critic of Najib for more than a year now and has asked the prime minister to step down over his alleged "failure" to govern the country as well as over the scandals surrounding state-owned 1MDB. – November 7, 2015.

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