

Drop the idea of charging Dr Mahathir, Zaid tells cops
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Police should drop the idea of charging Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a former Umno minister said, adding that the force should not be involved in criminal defamation cases.

Writing in his blog today, Datuk Zaid Ibrahim said the police should instead focus their investigation on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak over his alleged political scandals.

"All I want to say here is my sincere wish that the police just forget the idea of charging Dr Mahathir. If they want to get at him, charge him for something more serious.

"Did he commit any corrupt practice in his 22-year reign? Did he abuse his powers in any way? Did he have several off shore accounts and was involved in money laundering?

"If the answer is none at all, then I suggest the police focus instead on Najib.

"They should start questioning him because the world knows of the allegations made against him; and further many police reports have been lodged against him," said Zaid, the former de facto law minister.

Najib had been under fire over the RM2.6 billion deposited into his personal accounts by unknown Middle Eastern donor ahead of the 2013 general election as well as the controversy surrounding his brainchild, state investment firm 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB).

This prompted Najib's critics, led by former prime minister Dr Mahathir, to call for his resignation. Malaysia's longest serving prime minister even attended the Bersih 4 rally in August which pushed for democratic reforms and Najib's resignation over the alleged scandals.

At the rally, Dr Mahathir talked about Najib and the funds which saw him being questioned by police last Friday.

Zaid today asked why the need to involve the police on the matter although Dr Mahathir's remarks against Najib may have grounds for a civil claim.

He said Najib should instead sue Dr Mahathir for slander or civil defamation.

He said criminal defamation laws that use the police and the state to coerce and stop citizens from speaking up were outdated and should be repealed, noting that such legislations were created by the colonial masters to instilled fear on the populace.

He also said the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, the Human Rights Committee of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international bodies all pressed for the abolition of criminal defamation.

"Our self-styled transformative and moderate prime minister, however, prefers to humiliate Tun Dr Mahathir by sending in the police," he said.

Zaid also highlighted the lack of interest by the police to question Najib over 1MDB, despite numerous police reports lodged against him.

"The world is waiting to know if our police force is indeed independent and fearless.

"If they refuse even to open a file on Najib, then people will say our IGP is a coward; and they will say Malaysia has indeed turned into a police state.

"What a shame that would be, for our police force was once the pride of the nation," he said, referring to Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar.

Zaid added that the police must protect their good name and the reputation of the country.

"Getting involved in criminal defamation cases is not what a truly respected police force should be doing." he said.

Two days ago, former opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim also defended Dr Mahathir, saying that the former prime minister did nothing wrong in asking questions and criticising Najib over debt-ridden 1MDB.

"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." – November 9, 2015.

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