

MAHATHIR: I FAILED TO CONVINCING AGONG ON CITIZENS' DECLARATION

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By MT Webmaster

Former prime minister says people's movement would appeal again to the King and all the Rulers as the signatories to the Citizens' Declaration are their subjects.

(FMT) – Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today admitted that he had failed to convince the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, on the Citizens' Declaration during an audience with the King recently.

Speaking at a press conference, his first following the meeting at the Istana Anak Bukit in Kedah last month, Mahathir said he spoke to the King on the demands made by the Citizens' Declaration, which carried more than 1.4 million signatures.

"Unfortunately, we could not get a positive answer," he said about the meeting, which lasted an hour and 10 minutes.

Mahathir said the constitutional amendment, which he had pushed through in 1993, which removed the need for the King to give the final approval before any enactment passed by Parliament became law, did not apply to laws which would encroach on the roles and duties of the King.

Such laws, he said, would still need the approval of the King to be passed, but the government of the day, led by Prime Minister Najib Razak, had ignored this by enacting the National Security Council (NSC) Act as law.

Thus, he said the King could go to the Federal Court to seek an interpretation, pertaining to the failure of the government to get the King's approval and on the concern of the Malay rulers over the NSC.

"Even the rulers did not give their consent and wanted the government to amend the Act, but instead, they (Putrajaya) waited for time to lapse and announced that it had come into effect."

He said he appealed to the King to go to the Federal Court.

Mahathir also said that under the Interpretation Act, the King had the right to appoint a prime minister, and that this power also included the right to dismiss the prime minister.

"It is obvious that the Rulers have the power, the Agong has the power. Perhaps, they were not advised by their legal advisers, which is why we appealed to them," he said, adding however, he could not convince the King.

However, Mahathir said those behind the Citizens' Declaration would continue to pursue the matter as it was the people's wish and the people are subjects of the Rulers, hence the Rulers were responsible for the fate of the citizens.

Mahathir said in view of the Conference of Rulers, which is scheduled to be held on Oct 11, the group had sent letters to all the Rulers – appealing on behalf of the signatories to the Citizens' Declaration – asking that the Rulers take action against Najib for the alleged wrongdoings.

“We want to know whether the Rulers have any opinion on 1MDB and the action by the United States Department of Justice on assets purchased using funds allegedly embezzled from 1MDB and what action should come out of it,” he said.

The Citizens' Declaration campaign launched by Mahathir and 40 others last March, calls for Malaysians to join in the quest to remove Najib via peaceful means.

The document, which was made available online and on hard copy, also sought institutional reforms and the repeal of laws that “violated fundamental human rights”.

The document, and the movement which initiated it, has largely been dismissed by Barisan Nasional leaders as a “futile effort” to topple a democratically-elected government.

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