

**Rafizi: Thanks for the encouragement Dr M, I don't intend to slow down  
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Rafizi Ramli has expressed gratitude for the words of encouragement from Dr Mahathir Mohamad with regard to the Shah Alam Sessions Court imposing a 30-month prison sentence on him.

The PKR vice-president also vowed that the verdict would not discourage him from speaking out.

"I am grateful that Tun M (Mahathir) took some time to wish me despite his own health condition.

"While I understand some scepticism that persists out there, I hope more and more will accept the genuine union of purpose between the forces for change - the reformists group post-98, leaders deemed as 'old guards' as Mahathir and multi-racial leaders in DAP, Amanah, PKR, Bersatu and civil societies whose only objective is to rebuild this nation before the damage is too far-reaching," he told *Malaysiakini*.

In a video posted on Facebook this morning, Mahathir, who is also Pakatan Harapan chairperson, urged Rafizi to remain strong and not to be disappointed.

The 92-year-old former premier, who is undergoing treatment for a chest infection at the National Heart Institute (IJN) in Kuala Lumpur, also emphasised that the struggle must continue.

Rafizi said Mahathir's message would be viewed as a show of solidarity and defiance especially among the most important voters' group which are pro-establishment Malays who previously supported Umno.

"I hope his short message will amplify the moral contradiction even stronger among this group: that while the elites plunder, whoever who even attempt to give voice to the victims of the plundering will be severely punished," he added.

The Pandan lawmaker said he had covered 10 parliamentary seats in Perak over the weekend, which included the strongholds of BN heavyweights such as Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (Bagan Datuk), MCA secretary-general Ong Ka Chuan (Tanjung Malim), Deputy Minister Tajuddin Abdul Rahman (Pasir Salak), former second finance minister Husni Hanadzlah (Tambun) and Tourism and Culture Minister Nazri Abdul Aziz (Padang Rengas).

"The NFC (National Feedlot Corporation) verdict remains a significant emotive element among the ordinary voters I met along the campaign trail in these 10 parliamentary seats.

"I don't intend to slow down and I am scheduled to cover at least eight to 10 parliamentary seats every weekend in February, March and April," he added.

Rafizi said he hopes that more Malays in rural and semi-rural constituencies would "listen to their hearts" and vote accordingly to address the "unfairness" with regard to the NFC verdict.

“The NFC issue is also back on the map, although it has lapsed six years ago.

“The verdict just reignited the anger all over again, so much so I notice those who come to my ceramah want to hear more about NFC than any other issues,” he added.

Last Wednesday, the Sessions Court imposed the prison term on Rafizi for revealing bank accounts related to the National Feedlot Corporation's (NFC) subsidiary companies and its executive chairperson Mohamad Salleh Ismail six years ago.

Judge Zamri Bakar also jailed former Public Bank clerk Johari Mohamad for 30 months for abetting Rafizi. They were found guilty under the Banking and Financial Institutions Act (Bafia).

However, the court allowed a stay of execution of the jail sentences to allow their lawyers, Ahmad Nizam Hamid and Latheefa Koya, to file appeals.

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