

Umno not stopping Dr M from giving ceramah

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GERIK: Umno is not preventing its former president Jun Dr Mahathir Mohamad from accepting invitations, including from the Opposition, to give ceramah although many of these talks had criticised the Government, said Umno supreme council member Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz.

However, he said, disciplinary action could be taken against Dr Mahathir, who is still an Umno member, for criticising several supreme council members and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's family in the presence of the Opposition.

"How can he say that we don't respect him?"

"If it had been any other (party) member, then disciplinary action would have been taken and a show-cause letter would have been issued," Nazri said yesterday.

He had earlier opened the delegates meeting of the Gerik Umno Wanita, Youth and Puteri movements in Pengkalan Hulu near here.

He said if the former prime minister continued to raise issues pertaining to the Government, then Umno would continue to reply appropriately without losing its focus on its responsibility to champion the party's main agenda to serve the people.

"I will be the first to object if the party were to sack Dr Mahathir. It is because that is what he wants (to be sacked from Umno).

"Let him speak at his roadshows. Sooner or later, the people will understand and realise the real situation. Let him (speak) until he gets tired."

He said although Dr Mahathir had said in his speech in Taman Melawati in Kuala Lumpur in April that he was prepared to be sacked from the party, it had never occurred to Umno to sack him or to discuss any move to sack

him.

Nazri, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said Umno members still respected and appreciated Dr Mahathir's contributions to the country when he was prime minister, but Abdullah was now the Umno president and Prime Minister.

"So it is our responsibility (as Umno members) to give our full support to him (Abdullah), which is the same support that we gave to Dr Mahathir when he was the Umno leader."

He said Umno today was the same as it was before, and it would continue to champion the party's cause and not struggle for the rights of a particular individual by becoming too obsessed with the individual concerned.

"All of us (party members) provide strength to Umno and Pak Lah (Abdullah) is the party's pillar of strength.

"If anything happens to Pak Lah, then the same will also happen to Umno."

In Shah Alam, Perlis Menteri Besar and Umno supreme council member Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim called on Umno members to stop any attempt to create a forum to criticise the national leadership by using Dr Mahathir's presence at functions.

On the other hand, Dr Mahathir's presence should be put to good use by turning it into an educational discourse, he said when opening the delegates meeting of the Shah Alam Umno Youth movement.

He said he feared that any invitation to Dr Mahathir to give clarification on important issues might be turned into a forum to criticise the leadership.

Dr Mahathir has strongly criticised both Abdullah's leadership as well as several government decisions despite explanations by the Government. — Bernama



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Nazri