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Who is he? asks Abdullah

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KOTA KINABALU: The gloves came off yesterday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's patience finally wore off and he lambasted his predecessor, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir

was acting as if it was he (Dr Mahathir) who should determine who played what role in the party.

"Who is he? He has left Umno but he still issues orders to members of Umno. The party does not need to take orders from anyone who is no longer a member of the party," said Abdullah who was here to attend the Hari Malaysia and closing of the Merdeka month

celebrations.

"He is trying to create a rift and (incite) anger and hatred. What is wrong with people who work with me? He is trying to teach people to hate one another."

The Umno president said this in referring to a posting on Dr Mahathir's blog, calling on Umno to rid itself of all those who supported Abdullah, referring to them as "toadies".

Abdullah also criticised International Trade and Industry Minister Muhyiddin for not respecting the decision that had been made by the party's supreme council for the Umno elections to be held in March, by calling for an earlier date.

"Is he so impatient to become the deputy prime minister? That is, if he gets the support. What is the meaning of all this? I am not happy with this.

"When I decided not to contest, I did so to prevent a split among members. (Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Najib and I have agreed on this. I have explained to him why I need (more) time. He agreed and so did the supreme council.

"Is he trying to stop me from making reforms?" Abdullah asked, saying he did not discount the possibility that the criticisms and call for the elec-

tions to be held in December were aimed at getting him out earlier from his position as prime minister.

"I will be ready to go when my work is done. No supreme council member disagreed (with his decision) and suddenly this comes up."

Umno members, he said, would not be fooled by people who tried to create anger and hatred.