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## Salleh sacked, but given compassionate pension, says Dr M

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Former Lord President Tun Salleh Abas was indeed sacked but received pension on compassionate grounds.

Prime Minister at the time of the sacking Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he knew for a fact that besides the RM5mil ex-gratia payment, Salleh was receiving three pensions – one after serving as judge until he was 55 years old, another for serving until 65 and the third for being Terengganu state exco member when it was under PAS administration.

“And now he gets RM5mil. I would like to congratulate him,” said Dr Mahathir, who was in charge of the administration during the 1988 sackings.

Dr Mahathir said the other former Supreme Court judges were also sacked “as far as I know”.

“However, the pension was given on compassionate grounds as there was an appeal that although they were sacked, Tun Salleh, for instance, had rendered services to the Government; and to cut him off completely would have been cruel,” he told reporters after speaking at the Youth Values and Future Leadership forum at the Perdana Leadership Foundation here yesterday.

Usually, Dr Mahathir said, other sacked civil servants were denied their pensions.

He was commenting on a statement by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz in Parliament that the six judges were paid a total of RM10.5mil as ex-gratia payment, with Salleh receiving RM5mil.

Nazri had also argued that the judges were not sacked or suspended because they had been receiving their monthly pensions, while former *de facto* law minister Datuk Zaid Ibrahim had maintained they were.

Asked if he was shocked by the amount paid out to Salleh or if the sum was sufficient, Dr Mahathir said:

“This you must ask the *ex-de facto* law minister. I think he has certain values that we don't understand and he wanted to please the Opposition and the Bar Council.”

To another question, Dr Mahathir said it was up to the Government to decide whether it should ask for a partial return of the sum if it was considered exorbitant.

“The Government is in the mood of being very nice to the people and they have a lot of money to give.

“Then, I think that (former rural development ministry secretary-general) Datuk Dr Abdul Aziz Muhammad, who has been acquitted, should be given a lot more.

“I know him and he is a very nice man. He has suffered greatly and there has been a miscarriage of justice,” he said.

Dr Abdul Aziz was recently acquitted by the Kuala Lumpur High Court of abetment in committing criminal breach of trust and of cheating involving RM9mil.