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# Leaders upset with Dr M

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## Former PM's statement on Umno apology aggravates situation

**PETALING JAYA:** Several political party leaders are upset over a statement by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad who questioned why Malay leaders were apologising over a remark by an Umno leader that was deemed as racist.

It was reported that Dr Mahathir had said non-Malay leaders never apologised when similar racist remarks were made by members of their community.

Referring to the apology by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak made on behalf of Umno over a racist statement by Bukit Bendera Umno division chief Datuk Ahmad Ismail, the former premier said in his blog [www.chedet.com](http://www.chedet.com) the Malays were so scared of being labelled racist that they even wrote in Malay papers that the Malays were not racists.

MCA Youth secretary-general Dr Wee Ka Siong said: "We should not make the comparison. If we made such a comparison, the people might ask why Hindraf leaders are detained under the ISA (Internal Security Act)?"

He reiterated that Ahmad should retract his racial remarks and apologise for his action as it had hurt the feelings of the community.

"What is wrong is wrong. The most important thing is to find a solution and not divert the focus by blaming the reporter," Dr Wee said after attending the Johor MCA Youth annual general meeting yesterday.

MIC's secretary-general Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam said it was unfortunate that Dr Mahathir was trying to destabilise the current leadership.

"As a respected leader he should not make such unhealthy statements that would further weaken Barisan Nasional's solidarity," he said.

In Putrajaya, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said there is nothing wrong with Umno leaders apologising on behalf of members who had hurt the feelings of minority races as the Malays were the "big brother" in the country.

Stating that the Malays should take the lead, he said such apologies did not make the leaders weak.

"There is no harm in saying sorry. Even if anyone from the other communities (Chinese or Indians) had in the past gone overboard, two wrongs do not make one right," he said.



**New leader:** Dr Wee (right) congratulating newly-elected Johor MCA Youth chief Haw Chin Teck at the AGM yesterday.

"It is sad that Ahmad has dragged in the whole of Penang Umno into this issue because of his own personal problem," Nazri said, adding that he will be bringing up the matter with the Umno supreme council.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Shahrir Abdul Samad said instead of continuously arguing over who should apologise and who should not, one should solve the problem from the root, which is the issue of Malay supremacy.

He said the only way to solve the problem is to amend the Federal Constitution that touches on the essence of Malay supremacy because the

Opposition was playing up racial issues.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir has clarified that he was not defending Ahmad's statement nor did he like what Ahmad had said.

He explained that he was merely expressing his "disgust" over Malay leaders' inability to control racism and the culprit should face the Umno disciplinary committee if he refused to apologise.

He added that Ahmad's statement did not contribute to lessening the tension between the race.

"It is degrading for the second highest leader in the Government to be apologising for even an instance of improper behaviour by Umno members," Dr Mahathir said in his blog.