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KOTA SAMARAHAN (SARAWAK), SEPT. 9 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERIDR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TONIGHT SAID THE GROUP LABELLING OTHER MUSLIMS, PARTICULARLY UMNO MEMBERS, AS KAFIRS (UNBELIEVERS) DO SO BECAUSE IT WANTS TO BE IN POWER IN THE COUNTRY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID MEMBERS OF THE GROUP RESORTED TO THIS TACTIC IN AN ATTEMPT TO ERODE UMNO'S INFLUENCE AMONG THE PEOPLE. BY ACCUSING UMNO PEOPLE OF BEING KAFIRS, THEY HOPE UMNO WILL LOSE THE SUPPORT OF THE MALAYS WHO ARE ALL MUSLIMS. HE ADDED WHEN ADDRESSING SAMARAHAN RESIDENTS AFTER THE MAGHRIB AND ISYA PRAYERS AT THE DISTRICT MOSQUE HERE.

DATUK SERIDR MAHATHIR SAID THAT BECAUSE THEY WERE SO GREEDY FOR POWER, THEY WERE WILLING TO DESTROY THE UNITY OF THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY AND CAUSE HATRED AMONG MUSLIMS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA. THEY KNOW NO LIMITS AND ARE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING AS LONG AS THEIR AMBITION OF RULING THE COUNTRY IS FULFILLED, HE SAID. -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER REGRETTED THAT ITS HUNGER FOR POWER HAD LED THE GROUP TO MISINTERPRET ISLAM AND CAUSE CONFUSION AND CHAOS AMONG MUSLIMS IN THE PENINSULA.

THEIR ACTIVITIES HAD LED TO THE TWO-IMAM ISSUE AND MUSLIM COUPLES SOLEMNIZING THEIR MARRIAGE A SECOND TIME BECAUSE THE FIRST CEREMONY WAS SAID TO BE INVALID AS THEY WERE UMNO MEMBERS.

THERE WERE ALSO MUSLIMS WHO REFUSED TO BURY THEIR DEAD IN THE SAME CEMETERY AS UMNO MEMBERS WHOM THEY REGARDED AS KAFIRS AND OTHERS WHO REFUSED TO EAT MEAT SLAUGHTERED BY UMNO PEOPLE.

URGING THE PEOPLE TO KEEP CLEAR OF THE GROUP, HE REMINDED MUSLIMS THAT DISUNITY, AMONG THEM WOULD WEAKEN THEM AND THE POSITION OF ISLAM.

+ TOGETHER WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL, AND THIS SHOULD BE MADE OUR SLOGAN, HE SAID. -- MORE
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THE PRIME MINISTER WAS HAPPY THAT SUCH DISUNITY HAD NOT OCCURRED IN SARAWAK AND HOPED THE SITUATION WOULD NOT SPREAD TO THIS STATE.

UNITY MUST BE STRENGTHENED SO MUSLIMS COULD BECOME A STRONG COMMUNITY CAPABLE OF PRESERVING ITS POSITION. BROTHERLY TIES SHOULD ALSO BE ESTABLISHED WITH FOLLOWERS OF OTHER RELIGIONS IN THE COUNTRY.

HE REMINDED MUSLIMS THAT ISLAM REQUIRED ITS FOLLOWERS TO BE ON GOOD TERMS WITH ALL PEOPLE.

+ PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT MUSLIMS ARE NOT OUR ENEMIES BUT OUR FRIENDS WHO ARE PREPARED TO ACTIVELY COOPERATE WITH US IN DEVELOPING THE COUNTRY IF WE ARE WILLING TO BE FRIENDLY WITH THEM, HE SAID.

...BERNAMA