

# Hit squad claim: We'll act, says PM

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KOTA BARU, Fri. -- The Government will take police action against members of an "assassination squad" which some Pas leaders claimed the party had formed to assassinate Umno leaders, if there is evidence of their existence, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed said today.

"If the claim is true, we will take the necessary police action in accordance with the law," he told reporters at a Press conference at the Mara building hereafter meeting Kelantan Umno liaison committee members.

Dr Mahathir, who was on the first leg of a series of visits to the States throughout the country to meet Umno liaison committee members and Umno leaders, said that Pas had claimed that it had formed the group to assassinate Umno leaders because the party (Pas) believed that Islam condoned the shedding of the blood of Umno members.

If the claim is true, the formation of the squad shows that Pas has deviated from the teachings of Islam which preaches peace and harmony among Muslims.

The Prime Minister said that so far the Government had not established the identity of the squad members.

On reports that a list containing the names of five Umno leaders had been given out to the hit men, he said:

"I do not know if I am one of the five targets. In fact, I do not know the names of the five as I have not seen the list nor have I seen a police report about it."

He indicated that the Government, however, had not excluded the possibility that the claim was a mere boast, "because the new Pas leaders are given to boasting."

Dr Mahathir said he explained to the Umno leaders in Kelantan the danger posed to Muslims in Malaysia by Pas activities and propaganda.

He also explained to the Umno leaders that it was necessary for Umno to take steps to ensure that the Pas activities did not mislead the Muslims.

"I also urged the Umno leaders in Kelantan to close ranks to ensure that the party remained strong," he said.

Dr Mahathir also addressed about 600 members of Umno, Umno Youth and Wanita Umno.

On his arrival at the Ismail Petra Airport, Dr Mahathir was welcomed by about 5,000 Umno and Barisan Nasional component party members led by Kelantan Menteri Besar and State Umno liaison chief Datuk Haji Mohamad Yaacob.

Others included Umno Malaysia information chief Haji Hussein Ahmad, members of the State liaison committee, State Umno Youth head, Encik Hashim Safin and State Wanita Umno chief, Tengku Noor Asiah Ahmad.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by Umno Secretary-General Datuk Sanusi Junid, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah, Foreign Affairs Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen and Umno Youth dakwah bureau chairman Haji Dusuki Ahmad.