

DR M: BEWARE THE PREACHERS OF VIOLENCE

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ALOR STAR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned today of a group of religious deviationists who preach violence and "turn innocent villagers into blind brutal killers."

He cited the Nov. 19 incident in Baling where simple kampung folk, some armed with only parangs and beliefs that "their talismans could protect them from bullets," were made to turn against the police.

He said it was only after the villagers were shot that they realised they were not mightier than the guns.

"These villagers had been turned into blind killers after being brainwashed by deviationist teachings," the Prime Minister said when opening the 14th annual

general meeting of the West Malaysian Religious Teachers Union at Bangunan Tunku.

Dr Mahathir said even the women were being influenced and they turned half-crazy and did things they had never done before.

Some of them had also been told to brand the police and government officials as infidels.

The villagers were also made to believe that it was "halal" to spill the blood of policemen and other so-called infidels, he said.

The Prime Minister said the group's activities could be traced to the Batu Pahat incident several years ago in which an armed group attacked a police station but they were killed instead.

On Nov. 19, he said, another armed group in Kampung Memali, Baling, killed four policemen, resulting in a shootout that ended with 14 others shot dead.

"The police party had walked into an ambush by a group of armed villagers, all followers of deviationist religious teacher Ibrahim Libya," he said.

"They (Ibrahim's followers) used shotguns and started to shoot at the police without warning.

"The policemen retreated without firing even a warning shot and they had no time even to take cover. They were shot at while still in their vehicles approaching Ibrahim's house."

Dr Mahathir urged religious teachers to help

check this trend.

He said many groups had been formed, all claiming to practise Islam but they had deviated from the original principles.

"Some offer prayers to the sun and claim that it is part of Islam while others formulate their own style of Islamic preachings based on their political interests," he said.

He said this had caused disunity among Muslims "and if we continue to break away, we will lose our balance and our destiny."

"Religion is a belief that sometimes logic cannot explain. It is thus vital that Islam is not exploited and deviationist teachings be eliminated," he added.