

# Repentant Reds may not be able to return: PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Former communist terrorist leaders who have repented and now want to come home may not be that easily accepted into the country, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told the Dewan Rakyat today.

"We cannot accept their words that easily. We must not forget that they could have been involved in atrocities that caused many of our properties to be destroyed, our people killed or injured," said the Prime Minister.

"If they want to return to society, we have to detain them first, question them and find out if they had been involved in some specific incidents.

"If there are grounds to convict or sentence them ... we will do it."

Dr Mahathir, who is Home Minister, was replying to Encik Mohamad Noh Rajab (BN - Tampin) who asked whether communist terrorists who had repented, such as Samsiah Fakeh (who is now in China), would be allowed to return.

"If we find they are not involved but are earnest about coming back to society ... we will rehabilitate them. And later, if we find they are not a threat we will set them free."

Dr Mahathir told Encik Fung Ket Wing (DAP - Sandakan) that 200 hard-core terrorists, members of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and the Communist Party of Kalimantan Utara (CPKU), were spearheading moves to overthrow the Government.

He said although their number was small, they posed a grave threat to the security of the nation.

"We should not forget the history of terror and cruelty committed by such terrorists and those who conspire with them, particularly the members of the CPM who have carried out armed terrorism for the last 40 years.

"Although the CPM and the CPKU are a small force, they continue to be a threat to the nation's security.

"We must continue to take a cautious stand towards their plans and actions," said Dr Mahathir.

He said the Government had a plan that was comprehensive and effective to curb the influence of these communist elements.

He added, however, that he could not elaborate on the plan because it involved national security.

"What I can stress here is that our security forces will continue with existing security operations as well as other activities aimed at wiping out the com-

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munist threat," Dr Mahathir said.

To a supplementary question from Encik Zubir Embong (BN - Kuala Terengganu), Dr Mahathir said the Government was aware that through a so-called Communist Front Organisation (CFO), their supporters were infiltrating into society by condoning the actions of various groups championing various causes, like justice, human rights, workers' rights, the environment and social causes.

"Through this CFO, the communist elements will try to influence our youths, people who lacked experience and politicians who have communist leanings.

"The Government is always cautious. That was why in November last year we were forced to detain people who were members of this CFO who were inspired by foreign powers.

Dr Mahathir told Mr Hu Sepang (DAP-Rasah) that when he became Prime Minister, he released more than 2,000 detainees except some 300 hard-core followers who were not prepared to change their communist beliefs.

Dr Mahathir said the Government identified communist sympathisers from the stand they took on communist issues, the way they act.

To another question, he told Mr Hu Sepang: "If we classified those who are against the Government as communists, there would not be enough prisons ... there are many such people.

"If we regard opposition members as communists ... you would not be here."