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MAHATHIR : GOVERNMENT WILL TELL THE PEOPLE ABOUT ARQAM

Mahathir - Islam

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KUALALUMPUR, Oct 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the government will explain to the people its ban on Arqam's activities in government offices.

This was necessary to prevent confusion among the people about Arqam's teachings, he added.

Many had been influenced by the movement and believed that all its teachings came from Islam.

We feel it is a deviationist teaching and it is not sufficient just to ban Arqam's activities but we also will give an explanation to the people so that they will not be confused, he told reporters after opening the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (Istac) **here**.

The Prime Minister this evening chaired the 35th meeting of the National Council of Islamic Affairs which discussed among other things Arqam's activities.

He said the government would act against the movement if it continued to confuse the people.

The government had today banned its activities in its offices and also the distribution of Arqam literature.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said all publications, whose contents were similar to the Arqam literature would also be banned in government offices.  
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05/10/00-44MST  
CNS4052

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In his speech, the Prime Minister said the founding of the institute, established by the International Islamic University (IIU) was a brave enterprise.

To be worthy of the title, the Institute must be prepared to analyse and to reason and to find reasons, not for the principle articles of the faith such as the bearing of witness to the oneness of Allah S.W.T. and that Muhammad S.A.W. is His messenger, but for those other practices, rituals and values which make Islam a way of life, he said.

He said as thinkers, those in the institute were required to think, examine Islamic thought and civilisation.

You can choose not to disturb the status quo, to avoid controversy to play safe. But if you do that, you cannot be called thinkers.

Only if you choose to think, to enquire, to acknowledge the miserable state of the Muslims and Islam, to reason and to criticise the accepted interpretation of the religion, to debunk and to reach conclusions which in the context of present practise may sound radical or, even heretical and to declare your stand, only then would you have justified the role you and the institute are required to play, he said.

He said it was a risk that must be taken by the institute for it to dare to be honest even though it might be charged with being heretical by those who had accepted the present teachings and practices.

But the deviation in the teachings of Islam and the sad plight of Islam and the Muslims result in part from some of the present interpretations and teachings require that someone accept the risk, someone committed enough to Islam to set aside personal considerations, he said.

ISTAC is headed by its founder-director Professor Dr Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas.

Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, IIU president, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Syed Hamid Albar and Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud were among the 300 guests present.  
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