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Mahathir-Arqam

ARQAM MOVEMENT A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY, SAYS PM

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'KUALA LUMPUR, June 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Sari Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Al Arqam Muslim fundamentalist movement, had reached a level that could threaten national security but the government would be cautious in taking any action to reform it.

The Prime Minister said the people might wrongly conclude that the government was trying to suppress an Islamic movement if it acted because they did not realise that Al Arqam's teachings had become deviant..

Commenting on the Islamic Centre's disclosure that Al Arqam was training its own militant force, Dr Mahathir said action needed to be taken to check the spread of its influence.

"We have to act effectively and, to be effective, we need the people's support," he told reporters after opening the World Islamic Civilisation Festival '94 here.

Towards this end, the most important thing was to make the people aware that Al Arqam had deviated from the true teachings of Islam, he said. --

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Mahathir-Arqam 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said the stand taken by Arqam members in regarding their leader Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad as a prophet clearly showed the movement had gone astray.

The Islamic Centre's claim was denied by Al Arqam which suggested that a dialogue be held to clear the confusion.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said a dialogue would not produce any result.

"This matter can only be resolved by exposing their activities."

He said any movement based on fanaticism and personality cult could undermine the country's security.

This could be seen from the experiences of many countries, he added.

When small, it would not pose a danger, but as it expanded and its leaders' influence grew, they would definitely want to rule the country, he said.

Dr Mahathir said this trend could be detected in the Al Arqam movement.

"Arqam has expressed an intention to lead the country. By what means, we don't know," he said. -- Bernama

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