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Mahathir-Arqam

GOVT STAFF WHO LEAKED INFO ON AL-ARQAM ARE DISLOYAL, SAYS DR M

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PULAU PINANG, July 20⁹⁴ (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today described as disloyal and untrustworthy the government staff who leaked confidential information on the Al-Arqam movement.

He said those who sympathised with the movement and leaked the information to the group might have done so for self-gain.

"Leaking government secrets is an offence under the Official Secrets Act (OSA) and those responsible can be prosecuted," he told reporters after chairing the weekly meeting of the Cabinet here.

He was certain the matter was being investigated, he said when asked to comment on a newspaper report today that police were investigating how the outcome of a meeting in the Home Ministry on the Al-Arqam could have leaked to the movement.

The report quoted Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Mohamed Noor as saying that police suspected a leak. -- more

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On a report that Al-Arqam leader Ashaari Muhammad had directed his members to seize power in the country, the prime minister said he was relieved that Arqam followers had defied Ashaari's order.

"We feel that when a person is able to influence the thinking of a large group, eventually that person will have the desire to take over the government or seek positions unlawfully," he said.

An English Language daily yesterday quoted a former Arqam member, Abdul Aziz Wahab, who was an officer in the Royal Malaysia Navy, as saying that Ashaari had directed him to launch a coup d'etat in the country in May 1986.

Dr Mahathir said the government did not prohibit any religious group from operating in the country, adding that there were many such groups, but he said they should not deviate from the true teachings of Islam.

"If they deviated from Islamic teachings, it would be dangerous for Muslims, and the government will act against the groups," he said when asked why the government did not contain Al-Arqam activities earlier. -- more

Mahathir-Arqam 3 (last) Pulau Pinang

Dr Mahathir said that Al-Arqam when it was set up was unlike the movement it is today whereby it evidently deviated from Islamic teachings.

On efforts to rectify the activities of the group, he said the first step would be to correct the teachings of the group and if there were members who did not want to turn over a new leaf, the government would act.

However, he said, the government had yet to decide on the action to be taken against the group. -- Bernama

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