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Mahathir - Arqam

GOVT WAITING FOR FATWA COUNCIL DECISION ON AL-ARQAM

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 26 (Bernama) -- The Federal Government is waiting for the National Fatwa Council to decide on the position of the Al-Arqam movement based on Islam's perception before taking official action against the movement, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the National Fatwa Council would hold a meeting with all the states and their decision as to whether to ban the movement should be based on Islam's perception.

"If we don't take action, we are the ones in the wrong because Al-Arqam has deviated from Islamic teachings," he told reporters after launching the centenary celebrations of the Malaysian Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Services at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Before taking action, the government would have to explain to the people about Al-Arqam, where it went wrong and its deviations, Dr Mahathir said.

"If the people don't get an explanation, we cannot blame them if they follow the Al-Arqam. It is the responsibility of the government and mass media to explain the issue to the people," he said. -- more

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"Ashaari has claimed that he usually speaks with the Prophet.... . like we are speaking now'...and that the Prophet has called him Tuan," the Prime Minister said.

He said the government could ban the group but at the same time the government would not arrest anyone without reason.

"Hence we have to explain the issue at hand before we take action against the group or its followers," Dr Mahathir said. -- Bernama

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