

aae
Mahathir-Arqam
WOMEN MADE "SEX SLAVES" BY AL ARQAM, SAYS MAHATHIR

bm
94
KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Al Arqam has been used by its leaders to satisfy their lust by making women more or less "sex slaves".

"The focus of these Arqam leaders is sex although they appear to be concentrating on Islamic teachings," he said.

He said they focus their attention more on satisfying their lust by "exchanging" wives through divorce.

"I have heard that they remain married just for a while ... some for only 24 hours," he told reporters after a visit to and briefing at the Bukit Aman police headquarters, here.

"We feel that this is legalised prostitution," he said when asked to comment on press reports that Al Arqam leader Ashaari Muhammad intended to return to Malaysia soon. -- more

JK MGN

▼22/08/17-07MST

U GE 22-08 00171 EA883

aae

Mahathir-Arqam 2 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said he had received reports that several members of the movement would divorce their wives and marry them off to other members.

"We have heard stories of women being divorced and married off to other Arqam members when their husbands tire of them and it goes on and on," he said.

The prime minister said this state of affairs showed that the Al Arqam devoted its attention to sex although the female members covered themselves even up to the face ostensibly to portray themselves as Muslims who truly abided by Islamic teachings.

Dr Mahathir said what the movement had clearly done was to teach its members that they should marry "two, three or four (wives)".

In Ashaari's case, he said, the Al Arqam leader had married "more than that (four wives) ... maybe four (wives) at any one time but he divorced and married, divorced and married." -- more

JK MGN

▼22/08/18-01MST

U GE 22-08 00218 EA885

aae

Mahathir-Arqam 3 Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir said that in every religion there were groups like the Al Arqam whose preoccupation was women and sex and how to make polygamy acceptable.

On a foreign news agency report quoting the chairman of the Nahdatul Ulama Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid, as saying that several Al Arqam leaders had been offered posts in Umno, Dr Mahathir said he had never made any such offer although he would not deny that others in Umno might have.

"It may be true ... previously it (Arqam) did not deviate," he said, adding that usually movements like the Al Arqam would be "proper" in the beginning.

"At that time we can accept ... we can cooperate but later when its leader (Ashaari) became so influential that he could get his followers to do just anything, he started to deviate from the truth and to propagate teachings promoting his self-interest," he said.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said Ashaari had never asked to join Umno because "he is bigger than Umno".

Asked whether any legal action would be taken against Ashaari if he returned home, Dr Mahathir reiterated that it was up to the authorities whether to take action. -- more

U GE 22-08 00178 EA886

aae

Mabathir-Arqam 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Meanwhile, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor said Ashaari must abide by Malaysian laws once he enters the country.

He said the country's laws were not confined to the acts of parliament but also covered fatwa (religious rulings) issued by the National Fatwa Council.

However, he said, no warrant had been issued for Ashaari's arrest.

He said that from intelligence reports, Ashaari had asked his members to be calm and to abide by the country's laws so he himself should do the same.

He said that as a responsible leader, Ashaari should return and set his followers straight.

On reports that Ashaari was now in Thailand, he said the police were trying to get confirmation from the Thai authorities.

He said, however, that Ashaari had to return to Malaysia because it was his homeland and he could not live in the wilderness, especially when he held a Malaysian passport. -- Bernama

ES SN JK MGN

♥22/08/18-21MST