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Seminar-Law

AMEND CONSTITUTION TO EMPOWER SYARIAH COURTS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 23 (Bernama) -- Law professor Tan Sri Ahmed Mohamad Ibrahim today suggested that amendments be made to the federal and state constitutions to include Islamic law to upgrade the Syariah Court's position and status.

Ahmed, the dean of the International Islamic University's Law Faculty, said amendments to the definition of law should also make provisions for the Syariah Court, its judges and the Syariah Judicial and Legal Service.

He said this in a working paper on "Recent Developments In The Administration Of Islamic Law In Malaysia", presented at the International Seminar On The Administration of Islamic Laws at the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (Ikim), here.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad opened the two-day seminar which is attended by more than 200 local and foreign participants.

"The jurisdiction of the Syariah Courts should be increased to include probate and administration of Muslim estates, power should be given to the State enforcement officers to exercise powers of arrest and investigation and the Syariah Courts should be empowered to deal with cases of Qisas, Diyat and Hudud," he said.

Ahmed said that apart from improving and enhancing the powers, jurisdiction and capabilities of the Syariah Courts it was necessary to look at the civil laws and remove any conflicts with the Islamic Law.

At present the Syariah Courts were considered inferior to the civil courts, their judges and officials as the Syariah Courts were State Courts, he said.

"Many of the problems at present faced by the Syariah Courts in respect of their status and jurisdiction and the appointment and tenure of office of their judges and officials can be solved if the courts are made Federal Courts like civil courts," he added.

To make the public and the non-Muslims less apprehensive and critical of their existence and work, it was necessary for the Syariah Courts to show that they were capable of giving fair and equitable justice, he said.

Among the speakers at the seminar were the Chief Justice for the Federal Syariah Court of Pakistan, Nazir Ahmad Bhatti, who delivered a working paper on "Administration of Islamic Law in Pakistan" and Saudi Arabian Justice Minister Dr Abdullah Muhammad. -- BERNAMA

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