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Convention-Debate (Religion)

GOVT URGED TO SET UP ISLAMIC SECRETARIAT AND COMMITTEE

KUALA LUMPUR, May 11 (Bernama) -- The government was today urged to set up a secretariat and a committee to enhance the dignity of Islam in the country.

Johor Umno's representative Datuk Haji Abdul Kadir Anuar said the secretariat should be headed by the Chief Secretary to the Government as Chairman with the Islamic Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department as the Secretary and state religious councils as members.

The committee on the other hand should be headed by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Chairman, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Chairman, Chief Secretary to the Government as Secretary and Mentris Besar/Muslim Chief Ministers as members.

Abdul Kadir made the call during the debate on the working paper on Islam at Umno's 50th anniversary at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

He said the secretary should be responsible for coordinating and streamlining Islamic administration in the country, without the need to amend the Federal Constitution or religious enactments at the state level.

The committee on the other hand would be entrusted with the task of strengthening family institution, enhancing the quality and skills of Muslims, expanding economic success of the Malays and encouraging Malay intellectuals to produce more written materials on Islam, he said.

He said these tasks needed involvement of top leadership if Umno wished to see the democratic government based on the teachings of Islam remained in the country.

Datuk Haji Dusuki Ahmad, the Kelantan Umno representative, said Umno members should not feel small when meeting groups supposedly championing the cause of Islam.

They should instead be proud since Umno had done a lot for Islam within and outside the country, he said.

Terengganu Umno representative Datuk Haji Abdul Rashid Ngah, meanwhile, reminded Umno's partners in the Barisan Nasional (BN) not to mistaken Umno's willingness to share power as a sign of weakness in fighting for the interest of the Malays and Islam.

"I wish to remind partners in the BN not to take advantage and make unrealistic demand," he said.

He said Umno was willing to share power because it wanted to see peace and harmony in the country.

The President of Padang Umno Club, Indonesia, Mahyudin Haji Arisa said that in moving towards the 21st Century, Umno should ensure it did not bring with it the "virus" which had jeopardised the glory of past Malays and Muslims.

Mahyudin, who represented Umno clubs overseas, said Malays of the 21st Century should no longer be those who depended on government's subsidies and quota to compete with other communities.

In this respect, he said Umno should prepare the Malays with commendable values in continuing the struggles to uplift the dignity of the Malays, Islam and countr. --BERNAMA

AH AHH ABG