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Mahathir-NGO

DON'T BREAK THE LAW, MAHATHIR TELLS OVERZEALOUS NGOS

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 18 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government is watching the movements and actions of certain non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and will not hesitate to use the Internal Security Act (ISA) against them if the need arises.

"If the situation becomes bad, we may have to use the ISA.

"The ISA is designed for these kind of people...who are irresponsible, truly traitors to the nation," the Prime Minister said when asked to comment on the plan by nine NGOs to convene a "public tribunal" on Jan 12 to discuss alleged abuse of power by the police.

Speaking to reporters after witnessing the signing of an agreement between Airod Sdn Bhd and Sinmaywa Industries Ltd of Japan here, Dr Mahathir said the government would not stop the NGOs from proceeding with their meeting "so long as they don't break the law".

"But if they break the law...(and) if it is a public meeting without permission and non-NGOs and the press are invited, it is against the law and we will act.

"I don't care what other people are going to say about this country. They can yell and bark as much as they like but we will stick to the rule of law in this country," he said.

Describing the NGOs as "leftists", Dr Mahathir said they were doing it (holding the public tribunal) on purpose and were inspired by what their counterparts were doing in other countries.

"I find it unfortunate there are NGOs in Malaysia who are not content to see Malaysia at peace, successful, have no quarrel with anyone and no enmity with neighbouring countries.

"They seem to want our relations with other people become tense, our name tarnished," he said.

The Prime Minister said the NGOs worked with great efficiency from the aspect of the country's laws and they knew how to smear the country's name without endangering themselves.

"I consider people like these as instigators and the tools of foreigners who do not want to see Malaysia become peaceful," he said.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged there are "good" NGOs "but there are also very bad NGOs who are nothing more than extensions of foreign NGOs who are not happy at all to see Malaysia a stable and prosperous (nation)".

He said the move by the NGOs to proceed with their public tribunal showed that they wanted the police to take action against them so as to damage the country's good name.

To a question, the Prime Minister said he was not aware if the NGOs were receiving assistance from "outside" but they have been "in contact" with foreign people.

He said local NGOs have written to him alleging that Malaysia was not democratic and that there was violence in the country.

Asked if there was truth in the NGOs' allegations of abuse of power by the police, Dr Mahathir said: "There is no abuse by the police. In this country, the police do not abuse people.

"The abuse you can see in San Francisco where you can see on video what happened. Those are abuses. You have never seen Malaysian police doing that."

The Prime Minister also said the accusations of ill-treatment in the country's immigration detention depots by the NGOs were "all fabrications".

-- BERNAMA
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