

11 JUL 1996

Mahathir-JUDGE

RESIGNATION SUFFICIENT PUNISHMENT FOR JUDGE, SAYS PM

MELAKA, July 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said resignation is a sufficient form of punishment for the High Court judge who quit after admitting he authored the poison pen letter alleging corruption and abuse of power in the Judiciary.

"I think, considering the offence committed...it is sufficient that he resigns," the Prime Minister said when asked to comment on the decision of Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah not to prosecute the letter writer and to close the case.

Speaking at a news conference after attending the 173rd meeting of the Conference of Rulers here, Dr Mahathir said: "For a judge, resignation is a very serious act and may have repercussion on the future (of the judge)."

The Attorney-General on Tuesday announced that a High Court judge had admitted being solely responsible for writing the poison pen letter and had since resigned.

He did not name the judge but said no further action would be taken after the investigations by the police and Anti-Corruption Agency found the allegations in the poison pen letter "wholly untrue and baseless".

Dr Mahathir also said there is no need to form a Royal Commission of Inquiry as suggested by the Bar Council to examine the Judiciary in the light of the recent controversy surrounding the institution.

"We have carried out investigations...there is no need for a Commission of Inquiry," he said.

Bar Council chairman Hendon Mohamed yesterday called for the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry to look into the administration of the Judiciary and restore its image which had been tarnished by the poison pen letter.

On the council's suggestion that a Judicial Commission be established to recommend the appointment of judges, Dr Mahathir said the existing system is adequate for the purpose.

"We don't need to change the existing system...(the system) is adequate. Abuse of power can still happen under another system, if people want to commit abuse (of power)," he said.

In other countries, he said, judges are even chosen by the president.

Asked on the allegations made in the poison pen letter, Dr Mahathir said they were investigated and found to be baseless.

The 33-page letter made 112 allegations against 12 judges including Chief Justice of the Federal Court Tan Sri Eusoff Chin. They concerned corruption, abuse of power, misconduct and immorality. -- BERNAMA

MOZ NMO CTL