

15 AUG 1997

CONFUSION OVER APOSTASY ISSUE AROSE FOLLOWING ARTICLE, SAYS HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 15 (Bernama) -- Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said today that the confusion among the public over the question of apostasy arose following the publication of an article on the matter in the PAS official organ, Harakah.

He said that in the Harakah, the statement of Selangor Mufti Datuk Ishak Baharom that those who reject Islamic precepts are apostates had been juxtaposed with statements by various leaders on the issue of uniformed enforcement of Syariah laws following the incident involving three beauty contestants recently.

Dr Abdul Hamid said that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Muslim Cabinet Ministers and Umno Supreme Council members had never raised doubts over the Syariah laws but had only expressed their views on the manner such laws were implemented.

He said this at a news conference following a statement by Dr Mahathir yesterday that certain mufti had labelled him as "near apostate" because he did not agree with the manner the three beauty contestants were arrested by religious enforcement officers.

Dr Abdul Hamid said that statements on the enforcement and implementation of Syariah laws were made in the national interest.

-- BERNAMA

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