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Senate-Mahathir

DON'T BE MISLED BY LEADERS WHO MAKE USE OF ISLAM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Muslims should not be misled by the corrupt practice of leaders who make use of Islam for political purposes.

For instance they should not be misled by people who promise them heaven if they voted for PAS, he said.

Muslims should hold strictly to the teachings of the Al-Quran as believing in such promises would sway them from their faith, he said.

"If they subscribe to the teachings of the Quran, they will not make such promises. Unfortunately many of us are taken up by such claims," he said when replying to Senator Datuk Ibrahim Ali in the Dewan Negara.

Senator Ibrahim asked the Prime Minister what form of action could the government take in dealing with the corruption of using Islam for political purposes, which had swayed Muslims from their faith.

"People who make such promises assume that they have the power to decide who enters heaven....probably they are the registrars....," he said.

The Prime Minister said many Muslims who did not have a sound knowledge of Islam had been cheated by certain groups which resorted to the corruption of using the religion for political purposes.

On the proposal that elected representatives declare their assets in the form of a statutory declaration, he said the government had no such plans.

"The declaration of assets had being going on smoothly. I am satisfied they are making a true declaration," he said.

Replying to Senator Yim Chee Chong who wanted to know whether the Kelantan government's move to use public funds to buy shares was a form of corruption, he said this matter should be reported to the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA).

Senator Yim also wanted to know the level of corruption in Kelantan, the Prime Minister replied: "It is difficult to measure the level of corruption in Kelantan because there is no (Barisan Nasional) scale there. If there is this scale then it will be a bit easier to measure. However I am confident once Umno is in power in that state, the situation will be cleaner."

To a question from Senator Haji Sairin Karno, the Prime Minister said so far the government had no plans to ask leaders of opposition parties to declare their assets.

"If we do so, we are afraid they will stop being the opposition party," he said.

Replying to Senator Kamilia Ibrahim, Dr Mahathir said laws on corruption should be drawn up carefully as they could affect innocent people.

"We do not want such laws to become a form of pressure on innocent people. We not not want injustice to befall on innocent people," he said.

On the proposal that laws governing corruption be more scientific, Dr Mahathir said: "I feel there is no law which is 100 per cent effective. If the law is 100 per cent effective there will be no crime in our society."

"We know that crime still occurs despite the tough laws such as the death sentence for drug traffickers...but there are people who are still willing to become drug traffickers because of greed to the point of being sentenced to death," he said.

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Replying to Senator Datuk Abu Bakar Ismail, the Prime Minister said that between 1990 and now, the ACA had arrested 301 people for corruption.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, said the government was reviewing the laws on corruption particularly the sections dealing with penalties.

He said under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1961, the one giving the bribe, the one receiving and the intermediary, were all at fault and would be subjected to appropriate penalties.

To another question from Senator Abu Bakar, Dr Mahathir said he was confident that the ACA officers, with wide experience, had the ability to discharge their duties well. -- BERNAMA

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